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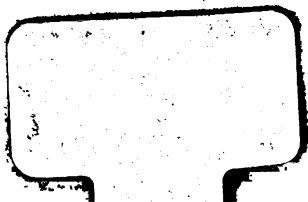
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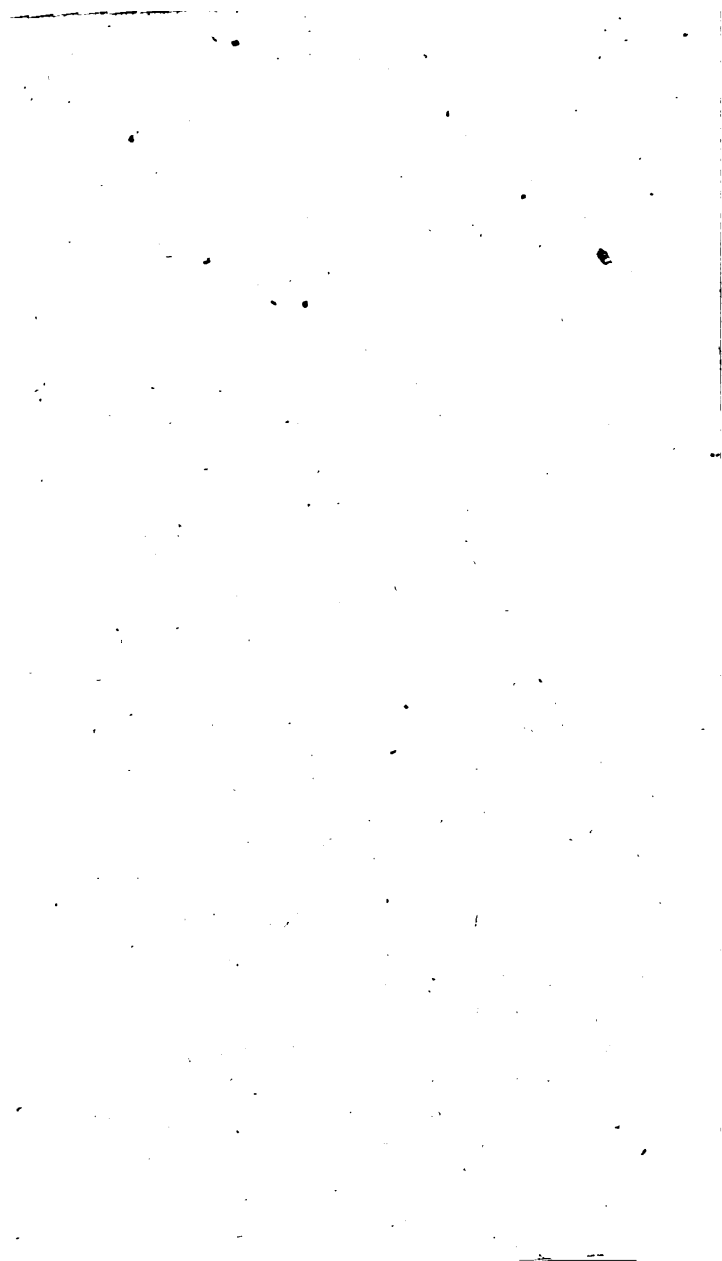
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THE

DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE,

VOL. II.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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T H E
DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE:
OR, THE
H I S T O R Y
O F
Mr. FRANKLAND.

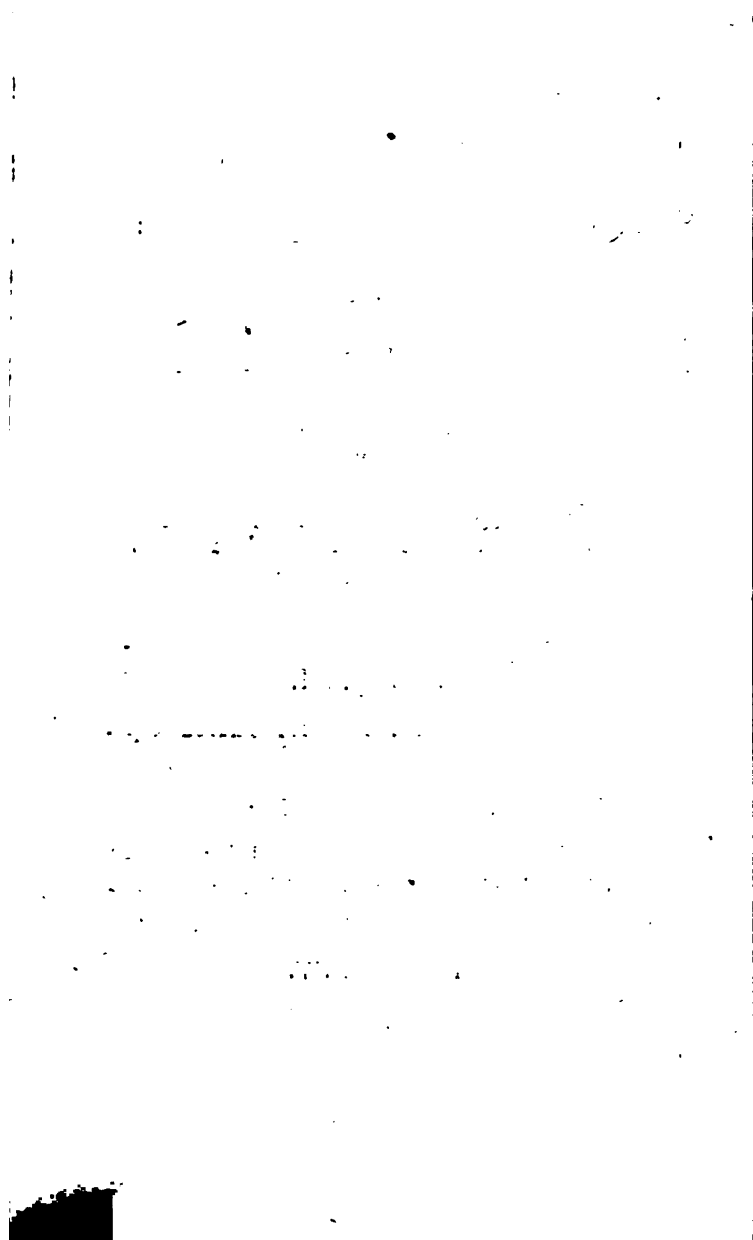
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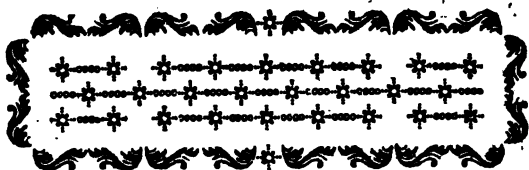
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T H E
DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE.



L E T T E R XXXIII.

Lady Lucy to Lady BELL.

IN CONTINUATION.

YOU want, I suppose, to hear
Y more about Lord Ashbourne:
but Louisa tells me she a-
voids him as much as possible; and
I fancy she speaks the truth; for she
looks extremely dejected: we are all in-
deed out of spirits here: should you,
therefore, come among us you would be
VOL. II. B infected

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infected by our melancholy, if you have not already caught it. Yet I think you had better come : I will give up Fanshaw to you. As you seem, both, to be disappointed exactly in the same manner, you may very well administer consolation to each other.

Do you know that I, frequently, keep open my letters, in hopes of hearing something more entertaining to add ?— I have now, by so doing, an opportunity to send you a little anecdote concerning Lord Ashbourne and Miss Plafrow, which may be of service to you.

Yesterday I made a visit to Mrs. Ellis. Louisa, who was in her dressing-room, sent to let me know that she was not well, and to beg me to come up stairs.

I obeyed

THE DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE. 3

I obeyed her summons, and found her sitting quite in an undress with her eyes swelled with crying, while her little heart was ready to burst with grief.

I could not help exclaiming at the sight of her in so afflicted a condition, and enquiring into the cause of it.

"Oh, my dear Lucy!" replied she; "I was right when I told you that Lord Ashbourne could never be any thing more to me, than my guardian."

"Why not, my dear?" said I; "you only fancy so: I am sure Lord Ashbourne is in love with you."

"So he tells me," answered she, with a charming simplicity. "He tells me he loves me; but still that signifies

B 2

nothing:

4. THE DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE.

“nothing; and yet he has behaved so
“sweetly — I will inform you of the
“whole affair. I had great reason, you
“know, to be displeased both with him
“and myself. I thought I had been
“much too forward, and that he had
“given me improper encouragement :
“I, therefore, resolved to correct both ;
“in doing which, I was, necessarily,
“obliged to behave with much cool-
“ness : I appeared indifferent, when I
“was, really, far from being so. Lord
“Ashbourne complained of my indif-
“ference in very respectful terms, and
“desired to know if he had, inadver-
“tently, done any thing to offend
“me. I made a slight answer, I be-
“lieve, and was going to leave him.
“He then caught me by the gown, as
“I had withdrawn my hand, and cried :
“—Stay only one moment, Miss Pla-
“flow.

THE DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE. 5

“ Now. I am not so guilty as I may
“ appear to you ; I am very unfor-
“ tunate.—Do but condescend to hear
“ me. — His voice, his air, his actions,
“ all concurred to increase the pity I
“ could not help feeling for him, and
“ made me silently consent to what he
“ so earnestly desired.—I was, indeed,
“ but too willing to hear what he had
“ to say upon a subject which had given
“ me an infinite deal of uneasiness.
“ Sitting down by me, he then la-
“ mented, in the most pathetic lan-
“ guage, his not having had patience
“ till he saw me ; for having, before he
“ saw me, made a surrender of his heart :
“ adding, that, ignorant of the charms
“ I possessed—[pray pardon me, Lady
“ Lucy, for mentioning encomiums on
“ myself—we are all, naturally, affect-
“ ed by flattery] he had met with Lady

6 THE DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE.

“ Bell Wallace in Flanders. — Next
“ to *you*, continued he, Lady Bell is
“ the woman whom I most admire;
“ and I so far proved a successful lover,
“ that she, at length, promised to be
“ mine, if I could decently break off
“ my engagement, with *you*. — I assured
“ her that I *would* break it off; and
“ came now to England for that pur-
“ pose: but when I beheld you in all
“ your loveliness, I could think no more
“ of Lady Bell, or of any other woman.
“ Severely did I censure my precipita-
“ tion, for having laid myself under any
“ ties before I saw *you*, for whom my
“ father designed me, as you appeared
“ in my eyes so much superior to every
“ woman I had seen. However, as I
“ have no fault to find with Lady Bell,
“ who has ever conducted herself with
“ the greatest propriety, and with a de-
“ licacy

THE DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE. 7,

“ licacy too that ought to be acknow-
“ ledged, I cannot act an infamous part.
“ by deserting her, without giving rea-
“ sons which may render her satisfied
“ with my behaviour: but *I* shall ne-
“ ver, perhaps, be satisfied with it, ex-
“ cept *you*, Miss Plaftow, can forgive
“ my unhappy inadvertency, and bring
“ yourself to accept of me, if I am given
“ up by Lady Bell. Yet how can I ask
“ for such a favour? Is it possible for
“ the charming Miss Plaftow to accept
“ of a rejected man?—No—I cannot,
“ dare not solicit such a favour: still
“ less dare I hope to enjoy so exquisite
“ a blessing. — Here he stopped; with
“ his eyes fixed on my face; while his
“ hand grasped mine with a vehemence
“ which discovered the strong agitation
“ of his mind: I was almost dissolved
“ in sorrow; tears streamed down my
B 4 “ cheeks;

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“ cheeks; I sobbed aloud—I could not
“ speak.—He appeared greatly alarmed
“ at my situation. Throwing himself
“ upon his knees before me, he took
“ my hands in his, laid his face on them,
“ and asked me, with inexpressible tenderness, why I wept; adding, that
“ my tears gave him the most cutting
“ disquiet.—I could not help owning
“ that I lamented our not having met
“ sooner, when we were both not only
“ at liberty to love, but encouraged to
“ prefer each other to all the world, by
“ those who had a right to direct and
“ advise us: I could not help owning
“ too, that the pleasure I had felt in
“ knowing I was beloved by him, was
“ cruelly lessened by the consideration
“ that we were never to meet—without
“ Lady Bell’s refusal.—Thus you see,
“ my dear Lady Lucy,” continued the
amiable

THE DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE. 9

amiable girl, "there are no hopes of
" our ever being happy, as it is not at
" all probable that Lady Bell should
" consent to resign so charming a man
" to her rival."

Not being able to dive into your sentiments upon this subject, I could not give Louisa any hopes, at the conclusion of her unreserved disclosures. I know how I should act myself in such circumstances—I *think* I know what I should do in such a situation: but when an enchanting fellow is become master of our hearts, reason, I fear, has little influence: love reigns over us with a tyrannic sway.—Poor Frankland! how I wish to hear that he is better! how I wish to have it in my power to make him as happy as he deserves to be.—

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This is a blessing which will, I doubt,
be ever denied to

Your affectionate,

L. M.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

MR. FRANKLAND TO MR. DESBOROUGH.

I Thank you for your concern, and
for your anxiety about me, though
they will be of no advantage to me, as
I think I am pretty far gone in an incu-
rable distemper; but as it is one of the
flattering kind, I am the more composed
under it; for though I believe I really
grow worse, I am frequently weak
enough to fancy I am better.

When

THE DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE. II

When I first came down here, I took great pleasure in planting, sowing, and improving my little estate; hoping, that if I could ever make an advantageous change in it, Lady Lucy might be tempted to consent to our mutually enjoying the profits arising from it; as I do actually think it is possible for two people to be happy in this sequestered spot, even after having seen *better days*. I am not, however, a mere *solitary*: I have neighbours who most earnestly court my acquaintance; but since the loss of *her* in whom alone my soul delighted, I am become averse to any society, and glide away at the sight of a human creature, like a ghost at the approach of morning. I hear that I am complimented with the title of the handsome phantom—What trifling is this, however, in a man who is, per-

B 6

haps,

12 THE DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE.

haps, near his end! — As Lady Lucy attaches herself to Fanshaw, the sooner I am removed out of a world in which I have no business, the better. Yet— heaven is my witness, I do not, cannot blame her. I ever wished her to be happy, and, if the character given to me of this gentleman is a just one, he is thoroughly capable of making her so. As she is now cured of the partiality with which she once honoured me, a favour entirely unmerited, a favour never to be sufficiently acknowledged, I cannot possibly ever repay it. I can only make a poor attempt towards the payment, by leaving her all I possess: that *all* is too little to be worth her acceptance: but I cannot leave her any more: yet what I *can* leave her will, I hope, in some measure make up for the ungenerous behaviour of Lord Grassington

THE DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE. 13

ington — But why should I reproach *him*? He has acted with an *apparent* meanness, I am convinced, merely with a hope, merely with a view to obtain the possession of a woman who would tempt almost any man to be guilty of all sorts of crimes, to gain her heart. Let his Lordship therefore be forgiven! Let her be happy with her new lover! yet may she now and then think, with a kind of tender recollection, upon

Your almost lost

C. FRANKLAND.

LET-

14 THE DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE.

LETTER XXXV.

Lady Lucy to Lady Bell.

I HAVE received a letter of Frankland's to a friend, inclosed in one of Harriot Swymmer's to me, which has shaken all my wise resolves; and will send me down with expedition to Oak-Abbey, to superintend the dairy, while *he* manages the farm. In short, Bell, the poor dear fellow is in a decline, and fancies that I am going to be married to Fanshaw, and talks of making his will. I shall certainly lose him for ever, if I do not hasten to relieve him.

You will tell me, perhaps, that I shall repent of this rash, unadvised step: but pray be quiet, child; I am of age,
and

and hold myself wise enough to know what will make me happy: and as for the opinion of others, I give it to the winds. I would rather stand the ridicule of the brightest circle at court; I would rather be shunned by the men, and sniffed at by the women, than give a moment's pain to the honest, generous heart, which sincerely loves me. No, Bell: I will throw off the fine Lady, and put on the farmer's wife: but I must hurry, or else it will be too late, and the poor fellow will be quite gone. I would not come upon him too suddenly neither: yet I must be expeditious. I will not send for him hither—I will go to Oak-Abbey myself. Mrs. Selby, who has talked very seriously upon this subject, has promised to accompany me. The Swymmers too must be of the party. What a strange scheme!

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scheme! you say. True, Bell: but honest fellows, men who can die *for* us when they cannot live *with* us, are not to be met with every day: and I confess I have a kind of ambition to save *him*, whose life hangs upon my will. Adieu, my dear: wish me happy. Whether I succeed or not, I shall never cease to be

Yours, most affectionately,

L. MENELL.



L E T T E R XXXVI.

Mr. FRANKLAND to Mr. DESBOROUGH.

WHAT transporting joy! Lucy, my dear Lady Lucy, has been here. Never was surprise equal to mine, at
the

the sight of her. I was above half a mile from the house, seeing my fellows load a cart with a second crop of hay. Robert, hurrying up to me, quite out of breath, informed me that a coach full of company had drove into my court-yard.

“Company !” said I, eagerly.

“Yes, Sir,” replied he, “three Ladies, and a Gentleman : they are come to dinner ; for they ordered the coachman to set up at the best house in the village : I told them that we had room in our stables.”

What an officious rascal ! thought I—To say the truth, Jack, I found myself in no sort of humour for visitors, nor was I, by any means, prepared for
their

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their reception. So totally indeed was I unfit to see them, that I could almost have quarrelled with my servant for having admitted them.—Before I thought of asking who they were, he prevented me, by telling me that the Gentleman's name was Swymmer; that there was a Miss Swymmer, and a Lady Lucy something, he could not tell what.—Robert is quite a country fellow: I did not chuse to bring any man from town with me, well knowing that your London servants are much too lazy to be of any service here.

The name of Lady Lucy startled me a little. I must have been half-distracted to have expected a visit from *her*; yet I sighed, I wished, I felt inexpressible emotions at the bare mention of her.

While

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While I was lost in a reverie entirely on *her* account, she appeared before me.

Surprised as I had been at the mention of her name, I was now agitated in a manner not to be described. I hastened to meet her: *she* also quickened *her* steps. When she came nearer, she held out her hand to me. I seized it with eagerness, and pressed it to my bosom, to my lips.

“Lady Lucy!” said I, with a faint voice, hardly to be heard, “what happiness to see you!”

“Frankland,” replied she, with a blushing timidity, which gave her a thousand additional charms, “I am come—”

Here

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Here she stopped.

"You are come," answered I, "to
"make me the happiest of men—"

I was proceeding, but she interrupted
me.

"I am indeed, if it is still in my
"power."

"Every thing is in your power,"
cried I, transported.

"I fear you over-rate it," said she,
with a modest tenderness in her eyes—

"Tell me—can I do any thing to re-
"store your health?"

"You can restore my peace," re-
plied I, catching her to my bosom;

"you

THE DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE. 21.

“ you can give me life and happiness
“ by giving me yourself.”

“ Take me then,” answered she : and
“ pray heaven I may not have given my-
“ self too late !”

Imagine my joy, Desborough—I cannot describe it—I only know that I expressed it by rapturous embraces, and by a swift succession of swelling sighs, sufficient to convince her more forcibly than a thousand words, how exquisitely dear she was to my doating heart.

She too remained silent, while a tear of sensibility stole down her glowing cheek.

I kissed it off, and then asked the meaning of it.

“ Are

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“Are not my terrors concerning your health,” replied she, “strong enough to make me extremely anxious about it?”

“Banish all your terrors,” said I, “my health will soon be re-established, as my mind is now at ease.”

The dear amiable creature, pleased with my assurances, soon resumed her wonted cheerfulness; and, after having declared her determination to be mine, as soon as every thing could be settled, desired me to return with her to the friends of us both who had accompanied her, and who had expressed great satisfaction at our approaching union.

“I made an opposition to Lucy,” said Mrs. Selby, “merely to give her
“time

THE DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE. 23

“ time to reflect on what she was about ;
“ but I now confess that you are both
“ very uncommon characters, and can-
“ not fail of happiness, because your
“ plan of life is so unfashionably ra-
“ tional.”

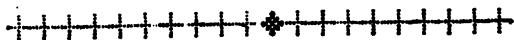
I thanked her for her good opinion, entertained all my friends in the best manner I was able, and kept them till late in the evening. I then insisted upon going with them part of the way home, on horseback.—Swymmer was so considerate as to resign his place in the coach to me, and rode *my* horse, till my tender Lucy, fearing it might be dangerous for me to return with only one servant, would not let me go so far as I had designed. I am now preparing to attend her in London. She is on the point of setting out, in order to accelerate

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rate the preparations for my approaching felicity : a felicity which will be the more transporting, as it was entirely unexpected by

Yours sincerely,

C. FRANKLAND.



L E T T E R XXXVII.

Lady BELL to Lady LUCY.

A Strange scheme indeed ! And are you really capable of carrying so absurd a design into execution ? Can you consent to bury yourself alive ? I am ready to allow that your man—from your description of him—is an

uncommon character, a *phenomenon* in the world of gallantry, a *disinterested* lover; but consider, my dear Lucy, how can *you*, who have been bred up with a relish for all the elegant refinements of life, bring yourself to be shut up in a dull, dirty, and obscure country village? How will you bear yourself in the vulgar character of a country housewife, after having figured as a woman of fashion? Your narrow scheme may, perhaps, be a very prudent one, but, surely it cannot be very palatable: it can only be pleasing, I imagine, to those who feel themselves inclined to laugh at you. Indeed, my dear, I never thought that *you*, with your excessive vivacity, and uncommon accomplishments, would dwindle into a tame household dove, and give up every joy in life; *that* excepted, arising from the

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society of only *one* person. Surely, my dear, by thus confining yourself to *one* man, you discover a very limited taste, a much narrower mind than I thought you possessed.

You will be possibly offended at my freedom, and think, that as I am under the dominion of the tender passion myself, I ought to have spared you, merely upon sympathetic considerations. I am not, however, precisely in the situation you suppose me to be: I have, indeed, so far got the better of the little love lurking in my heart, which was, in truth, only a plague to me, that I am now as free as air. Yet, though I do not interest myself sufficiently about Lord Ashbourne, to make myself uneasy on his account, I shall, nevertheless, expect him to perform *his* part of the

the

THE DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE. 27

the contract between us. I would have men cured of the ridiculous propensity they have to make love to every woman they see : a propensity which has proved fatal to many — many of our sex. I think, therefore, that *we* ought not only to be upon our guard against any future designs of that sort, but to do every thing in our power to punish those who have already acted in so infamous a manner. I look upon a fellow of this sort as a scandalous character, and unworthy of the attention of a woman with the least degree of merit. You will imagine, no doubt, from these sarcastical effusions, that I am out of humour with all mankind. I can assure you, however, that you are mistaken : I can even assure you that I esteem your Frankland, if he is really the man he appears to be ; nor would I say a single

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word against your plan, did I not fear your being unhappy in a way of life to which you have never been accustomed, and which will be so very new to you, that you will not be able to tell me whether you like it or not: all will, no doubt, be very fair and fine at first, but in a short time you will feel the difference. You will say indeed, perhaps, that you should be much more unhappy with Grassington: but are there not other men vastly superior to *him* in sense, and quite equal to him in point of fortune? You *had* a lover, the very man for you: Fanshaw was exactly the person whom I would wish you to marry: yet you, like a perverse creature, *will* throw yourself away on this Frankland, merely because he is handsome. Really, Lucy, I pity you,
and

and in return for my compassion, I expect you to give me all possible information relating to the lovely Louisa and her charming guardian, my faithless Ashbourne, as I do not suppose you intend to exclude yourself from all human society : you will, I imagine, keep up your connection with the amiable Plafow ; I shall then hear from you how these happy lovers proceed ; for surely they *must* be happy in the certainty of their being so exceedingly dear to each other. It is to be hoped, also, that Lord Ashbourne, when he has thoroughly fixed his inclination upon an object so capable of preserving his heart, will find no desire to change a second time : a man of so fickle a disposition would not be worth any woman's notice. *Your* man, I hope, is of a very different nature.

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ture. That you may not be disappointed, is the sincere wish of

Your affectionate

A. WALLACE.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Lady Lucy to Lady BELL.

I AM married, Bell, and happier, infinitely happier, than it is possible for you to imagine me to be. There is not, indeed, in the whole universe, such another charming fellow as my Frankland. Tell me no more of being narrow-minded, and upon being pent up in the corner of a dull country village: talk
not

THE DISINTERESTED MARRIAGE. 31

not to me, no want of taste, or of my being dwindled into a mere household dove. Bell, I could laugh at your ignorance; but, to be sure, a woman whom a fine young fellow has left for another, handsome girl, and a woman who is adored, and doated on, by the faithfullest and fondest husband in the world, cannot feel the same sensations.

It is by totally mistaking the word happiness that you look at me in a light so very different to that in which you ought to behold me. You think I am in a mean and contemptible situation, because I have married a man who might have enjoyed all those luxuries of life of which you speak with so much satisfaction, by being united to another woman, but at least that younger than I am, and possessed of a large fortune; but that

C. 4

situation.

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situation is, in truth, the most amiable one to be conceived.

Felicity, my dear Bell, does not consist entirely in magnificence and parade, riches and splendour will never give that heart-felt joy, to be enjoyed only in the society of those whom we love : and as for the joy which *she* feels with the man to whom she is, of all her sex, the dearest, who spends every hour of his life with her, and in studying to please her, is beyond expression — Frankland — is that man, that husband to *me*. I chose him, at first, for the elegance of his person, the gracefulness of his manners, the brightness of his understanding, and the virtues of his heart; I have no reason to repent of my choice : I have a thousand reasons for defending it : his respectful tenderness, his disinterested passion,

passion, his constant attachment, all combined to justify me not only in supporting my choice, but in being proud of it.—What can a woman desire more? How few women, indeed, meet with *such* companions for life! Who would not for such a companion give up, without the least regret, many advantages, and be content with bare necessities, rather than be tied to one less amiable, less deserving, though possessed of an immense fortune? *We*, however, are not only provided with all the conveniences of life, but even with many of those indulgencies for the forfeiture of which you pathetically pity me.—Can there be, Bell—consider my question with attention, before you answer it—Can there be a greater transport, than that arising from the fondness of such a man as I have described? To see my

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Frankland watch my every look, and motion, to find out my wishes before I utter them, and to gratify them as soon as they are discovered, is a luxury not to be described. — To see him depressed, and painfully affected, if he only fancies I am not perfectly well, or chearful; to see him ready to expire with pleasure, at seeing me entirely satisfied with *him*, and with every thing he does to make me happy; to see his hands tremble, and his eyes sparkle with delight, his bosom beat with rapture on my approach, though after a very short absence — are not these luxuries, child, not to be described? are they not far superior to those which *you* hint at: to splendid tables covered with all kinds of dainties in masquerade; to brilliant jewels, which might make me look more dazzling indeed, but which could not
add

add any lustre to my eyes; or any dimpling beauties to my cheeks? Glaring carriages, and crowds of servants, would only take off the attention of all who saw them from *me*: they would certainly be more admired; for such objects always attract the majority of staring spectators. In such a pompous style of living, I should appear to little better advantage than the Lady in the Lobster; and as to a great number of servants, every body knows they are the most troublesome appendixes to grandeur.

So far, my dear, I hope I have convinced you, that the want of the luxuries of life, or of a taste to enjoy them, are no wants with *me*. I enjoy every rational pleasure with my Frankland, and the highest of all delights in being so

C 6

sincerely,

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sincerely, so tenderly beloved by him.—
I thought to have given a little sketch of
our domestic plan, which is by no means
so despicable as you may imagine; but
I hear my Charles's animating voice—I
fly to meet him.

IN CONTINUATION.

I have but just time to finish my letter, by telling you, that Miss Plastow desired to correspond with me when we parted, and that I expect a letter from her every hour. Should I meet with any thing in *her* letter to make you either better or wiser, you may depend upon having an extract out of it from

Your still most affectionate

LUCY FRANKLAND.

L E T.

LETTER XXXIX.

MR. FRANKLAND TO MR. DESBOROUGH.

YOU made me promise to write to you, and to let you know how I like my new situation ; to let you know whether my fetters—as you single fellows foolishly call the most pleasing of all chains—fit easy upon me. In short, Desborough, I am so inexpressibly blest that I can scarce find time—I am sure I cannot find words—to describe the fullness of my joy.—May it be but as permanent, as it is exquisite ! May but my angel be preserved from illness, from every kind of danger ! Oh ! it is utterly impossible for me to paint the happiness which it is in *her* power alone to confer upon me ! All my fear is, that I shall never, even with my most un-
wearied

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wearied endeavours, be able to repay her for the tenderness she lavishes on me: the sweet creature, however, appears to be delighted with every thing I say or do, and cannot see a single failing among the thousand which I feel in myself, but of which I was not sensible till I became so intimately connected with so a perfect woman. Long had I sighed for a companion; yet little did I ever expect to meet with one so every way desirable, so infinitely beyond my fondest hopes. The greatest satisfaction, even transport, indeed, she discovers at every thing about her; though our manner of living is so very different to that which she has ever been accustomed: she takes a real delight in the management of her domestic affairs, and those affairs take up no small part of the morning; the rest of the day is dedicated

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cated to walking, gardening, and drawing. The evening is filled up with conversation, reading, and musick: not to mention a thousand intermediate endearments—In short, I can hardly get a moment to write to you, so deliciously is every moment employed: and I must now break off to attend the dear softener of all my cares, the dear improver of all my joys.—If you have any idea of true felicity, Desborough, marry instantly; and whenever you *do* marry, may you be as superlatively happy as

Your sincere friend,

C. FRANKLAND.

LET,

L E T T E R XL.

Lady Lucy to Lady BELL.

HOW many times have I read over your last letter, my poor Bell! how many times have I felt the sincerest pity for your mistaken notions of happiness!—But you cannot, I know, help thinking as you do, at present:—I, possibly, once entertained sentiments of a similar nature, though I believe I never carried them to the extravagant height *you* do. However, you cannot, as I said before, help it. I can only be sorry that it is not in my power to make you as happy as myself: but the highest rank, the most affluent circumstances, the richest jewels, or the most magnificent palace, with all the dazzling *et cætera* you can think of, will make you so,
if

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if you are not blessed also with the society of a man who loves you as well as Frankland loves *me*. I will quit this subject, therefore, and try to entertain you in your own way. The inclosed is a letter I have received from Louisa Plafrow to me, upon Lord Ashbourne's bidding, her adieu for ever, in order to perform his engagement with *you*. Yet should you marry him, Bell, do not expect to be as happy as I am; do not, in the least, think of it: he is quite a different man from *my* Charles; and so, my dear friend, wishing you may find some other more suitable, I remain

Your affectionate

LUCY FRANKLAND.

L E T-

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LETTER XLI.

[Inclosed in the foregoing.]

I Should have sooner sent my congratulations to your Ladyship upon your marriage—a marriage entered into with the most auspicious omens—had I not been exceedingly distressed by the departure of Lord Ashbourne. He has taken his final leave of your poor Louisa; he has taken leave of her for ever. I am thoroughly convinced, indeed, of the propriety of his behaviour; but I cannot help lamenting the necessity of it, with the most poignant concern. Had Lord Ashbourne and I been personally acquainted with each other sooner, we might now have been as happy as we are otherwise at present, and as we are likely to remain: for I really think he loves

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loves me too sincerely to marry any other woman. Yet the tenderness and the constancy of his passion, instead of giving me any satisfaction, only serve to make me regret his loss with a more hopeless sorrow. I shall never forget the moment of our separation. My Lord forgot his dignity, his rank, and every thing but his love, which seemed to increase at the very instant it ought to have been entirely given up. As for me, I was utterly incapable of conquering my own feelings, doubly pained by observing the operations of *his*. I cannot find words strong enough to describe what I endured when he put a parchment into my hand, telling me, at the same time, that it contained the writings belonging to my estate—"I resign it to you for ever," continued he; "hoping, and fervently wishing, that whenever
" you

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“ you dispose of your much more valuable self, you will meet with a man who has a just sense of your merit, and who feels a passion for you not less ardent than mine.”

In this manner he addressed himself to me, but he could hardly speak his words intelligibly.

On my bursting into a flood of tears, he stopped short, just when he was going to leave me, and said, with the most dejected air imaginable, “ Nay, Miss Plastow, if you weep, I cannot go from you.” He then sat down by me, and said so many soothing things, that I began to find my spirits greatly relieved. On a sudden, recollecting the indiscretion of which I was guilty, by listening to his melodious voice, I rose precipi-

precipitately—" You forget, my Lord,
" that we are to part."

" I had, indeed, my Louisa," replied he; " for *mine* I see you ever
" will be; that is, I am certain you
" will never give your hand to another
" man, though *I* must not possess so in-
" estimable a blessing."

" Never, my Lord; never," answered I: " never will I give my hand
" to any man—"

" Except *me*," added he, catching it
eagerly to his lips.

Only think, Lady Lucy, how much
this softening behaviour increased my
distress! How hard was it to drive him
away from me at the moment I was most
sensible

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sensible of his love ! I believe we should not have separated at all, had not Mr. Ellis come in : *he* knew, I fancy, how it was ; and thought that the longer we were together, the more difficult it would be for us to part. On his coming in he asked my Lord a trifling question about the chaise at the door ; designedly, I suppose, to remind him that it waited for him. At that time I thought Mr. Ellis's appearance impertinent ; I am now satisfied that he appeared with a very benevolent intention, to spare us the affliction of another private adieu. My Lord, however, stood lingering, and looking as if he wanted to see Mr. Ellis walk away ; but he, regardless of his significant looks, sat down, and seemed not in the least disposed to quit the room.—My Lord then, finding him immovable, rose, bowed to him, I took

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took my hand again; pressed it to his, fetched a deep sigh, and hurried from me without turning his eye once towards me.

As soon as my Lord was gone, fearful of Mr. Ellis's saying any thing to me, though inadvertently, to increase my grief, I ran up stairs, and remained in my own apartment, to indulge it, the rest of the day.—I was totally unfit for company. In the evening I received a letter from my Lord, dated from Dover, where he waited for a wind. Never was there, certainly, such a letter written by a man to a woman whom he was to relinquish for ever. He made a thousand apologies for writing, declaring that he was not master of himself—that he could not rest till he had, with his pen, taken a more tender, passionate
adieu

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adieu than he had dared to take in person.

I sighed, and could not—simpleton as I am—help expressing, in an answer, a thousand things which I also could not articulate when we parted. I received an inconceivable pleasure from the communication of my thoughts upon paper, for the first and last time.—As he was not then married, I ventured to indulge myself in this piece of folly, which I was the more eager to commit, not having been able to express what I had felt on his resigning all his power over me—His resignation of it, indeed, pained me the more, as I could not bear to be deserted by him, nor to find the man to whose care my father left me, so ready to give me up.—I told him, therefore, that I would return the writings (as I did not choose

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choose to be my own mistress) and continue under *his* protection, whether he was married or single; as my continuance under it could not be injurious to the Lady whom he made his wife: concluding, with assuring him that I would do nothing without his advice and approbation.

Whether he approves of what I have done, I cannot tell; but this I know, my heart is lighter since I have laid it entirely open to his inspection: for, tho' I were certain never to see him again, I should be exceedingly miserable to have my conduct deserving of *his* censure. No, I would study every thing which would, I think, please him, were we to meet. This will be all the consolation I dare hope for; and with this, after having wished him every kind of felicity,

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city, I must endeavour to be content.—
My task, you will own, is not a very
easy one. May *you*, Lady Lucy, meet
with a happier fate! How poor, how
trifling is the diminution of fortune when
put in competition with the man we
love! I ought to make some apology
for this tiresome detail; yet I have found
relief from the disclosure of my feelings
to your Ladyship, as you are possessed
of so great a share of sensibility. That
you may enjoy every kind of happiness
which this world can bestow, is the sin-
cere wish of

Your truly affectionate,

humble servant,

LOUISA PLASTOW.

L E T.

L E T T E R XLII.

Mrs. STANLEY to Mrs. FORBES.

I AM got hither at last, after having had a tolerable season at Brighthelmstone. Sir George, though a lover of pleasure, is not so eager in the pursuit of it as many men are who appear less fond of it: he is likely, however, to find amusement which he did not in the least expect.

One of the finest, handsomest fellows in the world is come to live here upon his own little estate.—The arrival of such a man, you will say, cannot give any great entertainment to my brother: but this elegant fellow, elegant he is in every respect, has ran away with a young woman of quality, the most ami-

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able creature in the universe, as Sir George tells me, for I have not yet seen her, though he teases me to death to go and visit her. Now I have no objection at all to the husband, but what shall I do with the wife? One handsome woman is always in the way of another. Sir George, indeed, is very ready to take her off the hands of us both; yet, by all accounts, she not only married out of pure disinterested love: she has been married above six weeks, and is not tired of her husband: on the contrary, she rather grows fonder of him: and as for *him*, they say, (for every woman in the place sets her cap at him) that he loves no body except his wife. Poor things! they will know better by and by, it is to be hoped. I was married near three weeks to Mr. Stanley, before I found him out, for I
was

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was a mere child, and monstrously ignorant. The moment, however, I saw he began to grow tired, I became as weary as himself, and we both took our separate pleasures with the greatest ease imaginable. After all, Charlotte, these men are immensely stupid: they complain of the licentiousness of the women, when they themselves are entirely to blame. Only consider how exceedingly weak it is, and foolish, for a man to marry a young creature, to be vastly fond of her for a little time, and after that, never to trouble himself any more about her than if she was his grandmother. *She*, just come to the knowledge of her beauty, and the power naturally arising from that beauty, after having been initiated into the most pleasurable scenes which she is capable of enjoying, is suddenly, when her hus-

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band's appetite is satiated, thrown aside, never to be regarded any more with the smallest degree of satisfaction by him; by the only man from whom she has reason to expect happiness; the man whom she has sworn to love, honour, and obey. Such was my situation with Mr. Stanley, whose insolence and indifference soon made me have for him the greatest aversion and contempt. But I have no hopes of making any thing of this Frankland, so vastly is he attached to one woman, whom he, with equal justice and constancy, I must own, prefers to all her sex. By the way though, there is something strangely gothic in their conjugal behaviour: I commend it indeed, but I think it, notwithstanding, very awkward and unfashionable: it is not, in short, according to the *ton* of the times. It is a pity that

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that Frankland, of all men, should be so constant a creature: were his tenderness not so confined, were he as fickle as the majority of his sex, his tenderness might be diffusive enough to make a hundred women extremely happy. I have lately, I own, looked upon constancy as the certain mark of a narrow mind, and think that there is something infinitely more noble in making our affections as extensive as our acquaintance. I dare say Sir George is of my opinion; but whether we shall ever prevail on these new neighbours to adopt *our* sentiments upon this subject, is another matter, and by time only to be decided. Whenever I am able to give you farther information about it, you shall hear again from

Yours sincerely,

CAROLINE STANLEY.

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L E T.

• LETTER XLIII.

From the same to the same.

WHAT restless animals men are,
when the favourite woman is in
the way!

Sir George would not let me have a moment's peace till I went to see this Lady Lucy Frankland; and what was still more provoking, he would go with me. I had much rather have gone by myself, though perhaps *his* company was so far of use, as to bring Frankland into the room to us: yet I think he hardly would have staid away from his wife so long. (What strange people! How differently do they behave from married people in general!) Never did I see so perfectly lovely

lovely a man so desperately enamoured with a woman, as he seems to be with *her*; and yet she is no *beauty*, very far from being one; she can scarce be called handsome. Sir George, however, —these men you know, Charlotte, always see more than other folks, often see indeed what is not to be seen—Sir George says she is the most beautiful creature that ever existed. She has certainly a *je ne sçai quoi* about her, which pleases even *me*; and that is saying a great deal; for we fine women commonly have an aversion to each other: and it is very natural for us *to* have a mutual aversion, as there is not, I dare believe, a single soul among us, who would not be glad to make a conquest over all the tolerable fellows who fall in our way. Now whenever women interfere in the pursuit of the same de-

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signs, they must of course hate each other most cordially. After all, there is something so insinuating, so agreeable in this Lady Lucy, that one cannot help being pleased with her, in spite of one's reason.

“ Tell me what she is like—how she
“ looked — what she said — what she
“ had on.”

She is neither tall nor short; neither fair nor brown; neither fat nor lean; she is of a moderate height, of a pleasing size, and of a clear complexion. Her hair is dark, part of it is combed up, and part of it hangs carelessly over her forehead, giving an half archness, an half innocent, picturesque air to her face, which is neither long nor round. She has an agreeable shape, and a pair of smiling eyes, under the finest
long

long eye-lashes I ever beheld : her lips are red and pouting, her teeth white, but irregular : her neck, bosom and hands, are remarkably white and delicate. So much for her person. She was dressed in a white lustring night-gown ; her linen was clear muslin, with a fine Brussels point edging : she had a pink petticoat, and pink ribbons : her cap was small, and particularly elegant, though rather too infantile for an undress : it became her, however ; and a woman of taste ought, only, to consult the *becoming* when she looks in her glass. This white neck was decently and gracefully covered, not with a twisted tippet, like a skein of thread, but with a small, well made handkerchief, which discovered and concealed beauties, Sir George said, at the same time ; but men have unaccountable ways of expressing

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them-

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themselves : yet, to be sure, take her all together, she is an agreeable figure, and has a manner, a spirit in her conversation, which forces your attention, whether you will or not. She has, indisputably, enchanted her husband, to whose person I despair of doing justice. To say that he is tall, and genteelly formed, is to say nothing; and it is impossible for me to describe the extreme gracefulness of his whole appearance; his excessive ease, and the elegance of every particular movement—his hair—his teeth—his eyes—there is no looking at his eyes—so brilliant are they—they sparkle when he is talking to any indifferent people; but the tenderest langour swims in them when they are fixed upon *her*, who seems to engage all his thoughts. He is very polite indeed to every body, but he is

at-

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attached, it may be truly said, to her alone. In short, I was soon sick of being considered only as the second figure in the piece. I had never a great idea of being the *confidante* of lovers, and I really could see myself in no other light, as Lady Lucy appeared to be the only woman in the room. Her man is quite intoxicated with love and joy, and my wife brother seemed to be as much charmed as the doating husband: he was so remarkably assiduous about her, that she blushed more than once. I, who never want something to say, expressed my apprehensions of her wanting amusement during the winter months, or in their dull, stupid village.—He replied, “No, Madam, Lady Lucy “has a fund of entertainment within “herself: she is very musical, and “draws in a very fine taste.”—“Pray,
“my

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“ my dear,” added he, rising, and going up to her with a beseeching air in his charming eyes, “ oblige Mrs. Stanley “ with a sight of your bracelet.”—She smiled consent: he then took off her glove as gently as if he was afraid of hurting her, and unfastened a string of pearls, to which his picture hung, of her own painting. It was very prettily done; but such a pair of eyes would almost inspire the blind. She has kept up all the spirit of the original, and made him even languish on her with her pencil.

Sir George was, as he is apt to be, in raptures, and swore that it must be transporting to *fit* to her. I declare I thought I made a mighty silly figure, while the two men, entirely taken up with

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with *her*, did not appear to know that I was in the room.

When my brother could be prevailed on to part with his toy, Frankland would not let Lady Lucy replace it on her arm herself. Sitting down by her, he was a long time fiddling about her; and pressed her arm so warmly to his bosom, that I began to think he wished *us* out of the way. She read what I thought, I fancy, and blushed so amazingly, that her doating husband let her hand go, and looked as if he was fearful of having displeased her by detaining it so long. His eyes were then hardly off her a moment. He asked her, repeatedly, if she was well, and offered to bring another chair for her, imagining her seat was uneasy to her. She declined his offer in the most obliging

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obliging manner. Sir George indeed told me, when we came home, that the sweetness of her behaviour had made him wish himself, a thousand times, in the possession of such a woman. In short, Lady Lucy has turned my brother's head, and Frankland has turned mine. As for *them*, they, at present, are too much wrapped up in each other, to bestow a look on *us*. How they may feel before the winter is half over, I cannot tell: they may, by that time, begin to wish that they had some tolerable neighbours. I am already almost moped to death. Sir George frequently throws himself across a couple of chairs, and sighs out "Divine Lucy," a hundred times a day. To conclude: these disinterested lovers, as they are called by people who know something of their story, torment me exceedingly; and if
I cannot

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I cannot make them serviceable to me
in some shape or other, I shall wish they
were farther from

Your

C. S.



LETTER XLIV.

MR. FRANKLAND TO MR. DESBOROUGH.

WE live here, like the first pair in
paradise before the envy and jea-
lousy of the devil troubled their repose:
but how long we shall be able to pre-
serve our tranquillity uninterrupted is
uncertain, as we have already been visit-
ed by our neighbours who are great
enemies to rural retirement: not that
Sir

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Sir George Castlwell and his sister Mrs. Stanley are by any means disagreeable themselves : the former is a man of understanding and elegance, and the latter is a handsome, lively young widow. Their acquaintance, however, does not at all coincide with our plan. The quiet conversation of the rector now and then, and the sober, civil chat of his wife, with a few How d'ees given and returned by some of the best sort of farmers and their families, and questions about corn and cattle, at market, are quite sufficient for us rusticks. People of fashion and taste are, by no means, proper companions for us ; they are, indeed, the only people we would avoid ; but I see it is impossible : the Gentleman and the Lady are, both, likely to be exceedingly troublesome. My Lucy is the magnet which draws the Baronet ;
but

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but what attracts his sister I am at a loss to imagine. However, they are perpetually coming after us; and by so doing very much interrupt, very much disturb us: it is really quite disagreeable to my dearest girl, who is not in a situation to bear fatigue. We have acquainted them with our design to live in the most private manner; but Sir George thinks that a *parti quarrée* is more eligible for us than a *tête à tête*; and as to Mrs. Stanley, *she* cannot endure retirement at all.—We laugh, ourselves, at our unfashionable taste, and look grave at those who would rally us out of it; but all to no purpose: they *will not* let us enjoy ourselves in our own way: we love walking; when my dear Lucy is weary, I take her up in my Italian chair, which *one* horse will draw with sufficient velocity; but as Sir George thinks no carriage

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riage fit to step into that does not require two horses, he is continually calling in his phaeton, and endeavouring to persuade my wife to let him carry her here and there; yet he never can prevail on her to put herself under his care. He sends us fruit, game, and nosegays which are uncommonly elegant for the season; but we had rather not be under any obligations to him. My Lucy is, I thank heaven, thoroughly satisfied with what it is in *my* power to procure for her: while *she* is pleased, *I* cannot be unhappy; though I should be more pleased were I not so pestered with people who cannot, at present, be suitable to us: nor will they indeed, I believe, ever be so. Mrs. Stanley is much too fine a Lady to please me, and Sir George has too much of the man of fashion about him to charm my wife, who prefers her
rustic

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ruffic Charles to all the pretty fellows in the universe. It has ever been my opinion, that a man stands a far greater chance of being plagued than pleased by his neighbours; and therefore it is best to have *no* connection with them. —My Lucy wants my assistance—I will conclude by and by.

IN CONTINUATION.

It was not my wife to whom I was called: she, it seems was just gone to visit a poor cottager, at a little distance, who lies in with twins, and to whom her purse, as well as sympathising heart, has been for some time open. When I came into the parlour, I found Mrs. Stanley, reclined on the sofa, in the most inviting attitude you can imagine,
with

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with her head supported by her hand, and one foot dangling over the other ; both of which were slightly covered with the prettiest pair of slippers to be conceived. Her neck, really very white, and well turned, was half-concealed, half-exposed to my observation, by the negligent air with which the handkerchief designed for it was thrown aside. Instead of rising at my entrance, as I naturally supposed she would, she only just lifted up her eyes with a languishing smile, and said, " Lord, Mr. Frankland, " I wanted to see Lady Lucy—As the " horses were not put to the chaise, I " attempted to walk : but, though it " is a little way, you cannot imagine " how much I am tired : I am really " scarce able to move : and all this fatigue now is to no purpose, as my " Lady is not at home, I find."

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Such attitudes, such glances, and such an address, required a suitable answer; but I am become perfectly dead to every thing in petticoats, my wife excepted. I therefore told her that Lady Lucy was gone out for the afternoon, and had not the gallantry to desire her to stay to keep *me* company. She was indeed almost necessitated to take her leave, as I did not once sit down, though her eyes, and every part of her behaviour, strongly invited me, but stood as if I wished her, impatiently, to retreat.

Finding she could make nothing of me, she rose, at last, yet rose very feebly, as if she was lame, stretching out her hand, at the same time, to catch at something for her support: yet *my* hand offered

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offered not to give her the least assistance.

“ Lord bless me !” cried she, letting herself fall again on the sofa, “ I do not think it possible for me to walk ; and yet I *must* return—Will you be so obliging, Sir,” added she, “ with a look and tone, which were, I dare say, in *her* opinion, irresistible, “ will you be so obliging as to see me safe back ? “ I brought no servant with me, and I am really afraid I shall not be able to “ go by myself.”

Still I made no reply. I stood in a posture of taking leave, ready to return to my grounds, where I expected to meet my Lucy, who went out at the garden door. I was quite mistaken, however ; she was determined to make
me

me attend her, whether I would or not; for getting up a second time, she caught hold of me, and said, "I am sorry to be so troublesome, Mr. Frankland; but indeed I cannot walk without leaning on somebody."

Still I hung back, telling her that it would be better for her to send for her chariot, though I dreaded the delay which the sending for it would occasion: but my scheme was unsuccessful: there was no shaking her off: she clung as close as if I had saved her from drowning; and I was, at length, forced to accompany her, merely to get rid of her.

Thus you see how exceedingly impertinent the politest people, the best neighbours, may be.

Hurrying home, before Mrs. Stanley had scarce set her foot in her brother's

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house, I met my dearest girl just come in, who informed me, that she had been as much plagued by Sir George. When I asked her where she had been, she replied, " 'Tis no matter : " — but I thought she looked in a flutter. I was, consequently, very uneasy. If I thought that he has dared to be insolent to her, I would let out every drop of blood in his body : I must not, however, be too precipitate, for her dear sake, as *her* existence depends on *mine*. Yet these confounded genteel neighbours make me with them a thousand leagues off. My dearest angel has looked pale, I think, ever since. I will have my doors shut against this intruding fellow, and his dainty sister. I do not want any company except you, Harry, and Miss Swymmer. You and they will be most welcome to

Your sincere C. F.

L E T-

LETTER XLV.

Lady Lucy to Lady BELL.

I SHOULD be the happiest creature in the world, were there no impertinent people in it.

We have a Sir George Caswell and his sister come down here to *his* house, which is not far from ours: would it was an hundred miles off. Their acquaintance is by no means desirable, quite otherwise indeed. They are, at first sight, agreeable enough; but we must not, we cannot judge by appearances: they are extremely deceitful—yet, had we never been deceived, Frankland and I should have contracted intimacies with the greatest circumspection.

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There

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There are some people indeed who will not be kept at a distance ; Sir George is a man of this cast. I should not, however, mind his encroachments, were I not afraid that my dear Charles should be drawn into a quarrel on *my* account. When I think of *that*, I actually tremble, and about so foolish an affair too. Having been to give a little advice, and a little money, to a poor tenant, who rents a cottage at the back of our ground, I met, on my return home, Sir George. He told me he had been waiting for my coming out, from the time he saw me go in. I replied, that he had given himself a great deal of unnecessary trouble ; adding, that I did not know he could have any business with *me*.—" The same business," answered he, " which all who see you have—to admire you." Then, throw-

ing his arm round me, he began to take some very unbecoming freedoms. I broke from him immediately, and was hurrying home as fast as possible: he seized my hand, and putting it under his arm, squeezed it closely; declaring, at the same time, that he would take care of me, and carry me in his arms, rather than suffer me to walk too far.—

Provoked at this excessive familiarity, I pulled my hand away with violence, and told him I did not understand such behaviour: but he swore I should not leave him in anger, running into a conversation not at all fit for *my* hearing; a conversation which would have been highly disagreeable to me, had not my heart been immoveably fixed. I was now quite angry with him: I struggled, and, at length, disengaged myself from him; but he, somehow, contrived to kiss me

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before I could entirely shake him off. His last impertinence roused my indignation to such a degree, that I hardly knew what I said to him. I only know I came home so very much disconcerted, that my dear Frankland was quite alarmed at my appearance : he has been anxious about me ever since : he is, indeed, the kindest, best of men : I always thought I should be happy with him, but never could have conceived the felicity which I enjoy. I have entirely brought Mrs. Selby to approve of my marriage, though she was at first extremely averse to it. She informs me that my cousin Harry Menel is perfectly recovered, and that he is going to be married to a Lady who has been some time at Montpelier with her father, whom she accompanied for the restoration of his health. I sincerely wish that
he

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he may be as happily married as I am. I suppose I shall soon give *you* joy also, as Lord Ashbourne has left England a considerable time. This puts me in mind of my not having answered yours with my usual expedition; but I have not now so much leisure as I had before I changed my name: my hours are all devoted to my Frankland. Besides, I am become very diligent and active with my needle: I am preparing for the reception of a little stranger, who is expected to make his appearance ere long. Indeed, my dear Bell, I am become the very woman you described, a downright domestic animal; and I glory in my domestication with such a man as Frankland, whose tenderneſſes and attentions render me the happiest of wives. I even fancy too that the uncommon share of health which I enjoy, arises from my conjugal

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happiness : uncommon, and particularly so at a time when many women are very much indisposed, alarmed, and disquieted. You will wonder perhaps that I, who have been brought up so totally ignorant of every thing relating to *these situations*, should have any knowledge of the motherly kind. To tell you the truth, Mrs. Bowen, the Rector's wife, who seems to be the best sort of woman in the world, is infinitely serviceable to me with *her* knowledge. She has taught me how to cut out and make every thing necessary for the approaching occasion, which employs me very agreeably. While I am so employed, Mr. Frankland reads to me, plays to me, or sings to me : sometimes too he makes sketches of me, in the various attitudes in which he finds me, when he returns from looking after his men
in

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in their different occupations about his grounds, which are all well manured, and have been sowed with whatever is most likely to turn to account: so that if the weather proves favourable, we shall be rich *in our way*. But I begin to talk so perfectly like a farmer's wife, you will be quite tired of my rustic communications. — Believe me, however, with all my rusticity,

Your ever affectionate

LUCY FRANKLAND.



LETTER XLVI.

SIR GEORGE CASWELL TO WILLIAM
BRANDER, Esquire.

I Have told you what a charming dear creature is come to live near me:

E 5

the

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the mischief is, she is married: Were she like *some* married women indeed, my designs on her would be forwarded exceedingly. Quite different from almost her whole sex, she is so strangely attached to her husband, that there is no making any thing of her. He is a handsome young fellow, it must be allowed; but one would imagine that she might look upon somebody else now and then—To be always with the same man—What an unaccountable attachment, in a woman of quality too!—She is absolutely intoxicated. Yet with all this fondness for her husband, this passion for a particular man, she is the most lively and agreeable creature in the universe, and has a pair of spirited, laughing eyes, which would invite the dullest of all dull mortals to admire them, to
love

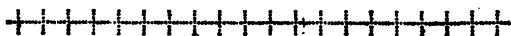
love them. But while this favourite is in the way, who scarce ever leaves her, there is no getting at her. I have set Mrs. Stanley upon him: she has, you know, the most insinuating manners, and not the least aversion to handsome fellows: he is, however, so insensible to all her powers of pleasing, that she is *monstrously provoked* with him. Nothing can, certainly, be more mortifying to a fine woman, than to see herself neglected, especially for another whom she may think not so beautiful as herself, and who, possibly, may not really be so.—As to Lady Lucy, I shall never enjoy a *séjour* with her till this husband is removed. — Something, therefore, must be done. Cannot you help me out upon this occasion? I have assisted *you* before now. Think a little—I am desperately

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enamoured, and must actually have her,
or be no longer

Your &c.

GEORGE CASWELL.



LETTER XLVII.

MR. FRANKLAND to MR. DESBOROUGH.

I Am quite unhappy about my Lucy :
she has been very much disorder-
ed : the good women say that she has
been frightened. She absolutely denies
any such thing ; but I observe that
she appears extremely fluttered at
times. To the increase of my anxiety,
I have received a letter from a very great
man who shall, at present, be nameless ;
with the offer of a lucrative appointment
at

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at *Dominica*. This offer has puzzled me exceedingly. Situated as I am, married to a fine young woman of quality, who has been accustomed to live in the most elegant style, who has given up a very large fortune entirely for *my* sake; and who, with the most uncommon condescension, submits to a mode of life so diametrically opposite to that in which she had been bred, and which she has a right to expect—who is also very near bringing me a child who can only inherit the little fortune I am master of after the decease of its amiable mother, who *must*, who *shall* have a settlement, though my other children—should I have any more—may be beggared by it—Thus circumstanced, I say, can I, without doing the greatest injustice imaginable to this charming woman and to her children, refuse an offer

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offer which may prove advantageous to them? But then I cannot think of separating myself from my dearest Lucy, nor can I think of taking her with me—The alternative is equally disagreeable. I even do not know how to break this business to her just now, for fear of alarming her too much; and yet, as it must be done, the sooner the better. I ought not to hesitate a single moment about the acceptance of a place that *may*, that undoubtedly *will* enable me to make an ample provision for my Lucy and her children. It is a duty I owe them; and however disagreeable it may be to me to accept of the offered post, whatever inconveniences I may put myself to in the discharge of it, I ought not to decline it. Yet my fears on my dearest creature's account prevent my taking any resolution.—In a short time; however,

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ever, there *must* be something determined, one way or the other, by

Your sincere

C. F.



L E T T E R XLVIII.

Lady LUCY to Lady BELL.

I Have been very much out of order, my dear Bell, or you would have heard of me before; and my mind has been still more indisposed than my body. I have been very miserable indeed. Some officious person, fancying that we cannot be happy because we are not rich, has taken it into his head to offer my Charles *a place*; but it is such *a place* that the acceptance of it will make me wretched.

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wretched. He is pressed to go to the West Indies, and without *me* too. Can I hear of such a separation? can I hear of it without being distracted? Certainly not: I had rather live in the most frugal manner, I had rather be deprived not only of the pleasures of life, but of many of the conveniences, which we at present enjoy—and may continue to enjoy with œconomy—than be separated from my Charles. To what purpose should I wish to change my situation? I declare I cannot consent to it. I would rather die than be separated from my Frankland, or see him on *my* account—for he had a genteel sufficiency when I married him—driven from his native land; from his own small, yet well cultivated, paternal estate, to a clime which must, undoubtedly, be very disagreeable to him—and very pernicious too—
not

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not to mention the state of odious dependance in which he must necessarily live. I shudder at the thoughts of it, and have, by the earnestness of my intreaties, prevailed on him to refuse an offer which, but for *my* sake, for the sake of tendering *my* situation more affluent, he never would have thought of accepting. He is the kindest, the most indulgent of men; and, till this talk of a separation, never has occasioned me a moment's uneasiness.

I have been a good deal persecuted by this impertinent Sir George: and I suffer the more from his impertinence, as I am obliged to conceal it from my Frankland, lest he should—as I am certain he would—correct him. He hardly lets me have a minute's rest: he follows me every where; he pesters me
with

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with presents ; he is continually sending me notes and compliments, of which I take not any notice : and yet he will not desist. From this quarter, I imagine, the offer of the *place* comes ; as he thinks that I cannot venture upon such a voyage, and that Mr. Frankland must leave England as soon as he accepts of his West Indian appointment, I hope, however, that he never *will*, on any account listen to it. Yet I cannot help being apprehensive that a mistaken tenderness for *me* may prompt him to take a step for the, *supposed*, increase of my happiness, which will render us both very miserable. I have been quite negligent of all my correspondents ; I cannot, therefore, be surpris'd at not hearing so frequently from Miss Plafrow. Frequently, indeed, do I imagine that she bears the absence of Lord Ashbourne
but

but indifferently. She ought not to think of him any more than of an entire stranger.—The best, the most likely way to forget him, would be to think more favourably of some other man: that, however, is probably as difficult a task for Louisa, as it would be for

Your

LUCY FRANKLAND.

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L E T T E R XLIX.

Mr. FRANKLAND to Mr. DESBOROUGH.

MY Lucy is an angelic creature: she has not only expressed the tenderest fears at the thoughts of part-
ing

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ing with me, but has discovered an affection so truly disinterested for me, that my passion for her is raised almost to adoration. She has also set the means of quitting the cultivation of my own lands (an employment, she says, most worthy of an English gentleman's attention) in so striking a light, that I actually feel myself ashamed of having thought of accepting a *place* that must not only have rendered me miserable, but despicable too ; as my situation would not only have been servile, but infamous. The business designed for me was to collect duties, which are ever paid with reluctance, because they distress the indigent, and grind the industrious. In short, my dearest Lucy compared the folly, cruelty, and wretchedness of the life I was going to enter into, with the ease, happiness, and independance
of

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of the life I enjoyed, in so striking a manner, that I was convinced in a moment. — “ You are not only happier,” continued she to me, “ by living upon
“ your own estate, and improving it,
“ but you may also do an infinite deal
“ of good. How many poor families
“ do you now assist, by employing the
“ people who compose them ; and how
“ many more would be in a fair way to
“ be fed and cloathed, were the land
“ every where cultivated, and were the
“ growth of every thing necessary for
“ the support of our species encouraged !”

I sat and listened, with wonder and admiration, to the amiable creature’s eloquence and knowledge, and expressed the satisfaction I felt by the warmest endearments, by the most grateful acknowledgements

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knowledgements to her, for having pointed out to me the only way to make myself both useful and happy. To increase my satisfaction, she tells me, that she has not a single wish ungratified, while I am near her, and while I am contented with my situation. Can I be unhappy when this excellent woman, with an ingenuity and industry which would do honour to the wife of a mechanic, sits and prepares, with her own hand, every thing necessary for the approaching hour of trial? — May it prove an hour of felicity to us both! — Does not this dear woman therefore, who has descended from the sphere in which her rank had placed her, to move in a much inferior one; who chearfully studies to be frugal in every shape; to be the strictest œconomist, for *my* sake—deserve the highest encomiums? — Would
to

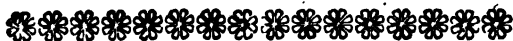
to heaven it was in my power to reward her noble, disinterested love with a fortune, which might make amends for all her labours—for labours they may be called—on *my* account needless! Yet I sometimes think it would be almost a pity to deprive the world of so exemplary a character. Blush ye degenerate, modern wives, and learn from my accomplished Lucy, how ye ought to conduct yourselves; how ye ought to behave, that those who chuse ye for their future companions, may not be disappointed. Let my Lucy's bright example shew the world what women *should* be; let it cure her own sex of the innumerable follies which deter the men from venturing on them; and let those men, who sneer at domestic joys, know, that they are the greatest, the most durable ones, when shared with a female companion

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panion who is not ashamed of thinking
and acting like the wife of

Your uncommonly happy

CHARLES FRANKLAND.



LETTER L.

From the same to the same.

THE refusal of *one* offer has been
succeeded by another. My ob-
jections to going abroad were admitted,
and I sat down more satisfied than ever
with my situation at home. — While I
was enjoying *that* situation, a lucrative
place was proposed to me in an office
near the court, and of course in the
midst

midst of the pleasures of the town. I was told that my wife might share *those* pleasures with me ; and the person who told me so added, that he supposed—— (it was indeed a very rational supposition) I should be doubly induced to accept of it, in consequence of such a consideration. I really thought this a very eligible proposal, and that I could not, without doing injustice to my Lucy, decline it : but when I mentioned it to *her*, she started nearly the same objections which she had discovered to the former one ; telling me again, that my absence from my farm would necessarily prevent me from attending to the cultivation of my land, which would turn to more account, she said, than any other employment. “ But supposing your *place* should be an advantageous one,” continued she, “ you will certainly lose

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“ that noble independance which sets
“ you far above any titled slave in the
“ kingdom.”

What spirit ! What sentiments ! I
could not sufficiently admire them.—
Catching her to my bosom with rapture,
I told her she was a little heroine.

“ Still however, my Lucy,” replied
I, “ let me do *something* for you and
“ yours. — I may accept of this place,
“ and hold it as long as I like it : there
“ may not be those disagreeable appen-
“ dices to it of which you are appre-
“ hensive.—At least, I may give it up,
“ whenever I meet with any thing I
“ do not approve of.”

“ No,” answered she, “ if you once
“ accept of the place, you will never
“ give

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“ give it up: you may be *turned out*,
“ but you will never *resign*. there is a
“ strong desire in most people in luera-
“ tive employments to improve their
“ circumstances, yet that desire often
“ throws them into embarrassing situa-
“ tions, and puts them upon doing
“ things which only serve to make them
“ load themselves with reproaches. In
“ short, my dear Charles, it is always
“ safest to be out of the reach of tempta-
“ tion, as those who have the strongest
“ heads, and the best hearts, are not at
“ all times able to avoid the snares laid
“ for them.”

What a head, what a heart has the ami-
able creature ! She acts quite agreeably to
the sentiments she utters. She sits in the
plainest, in the neatest dress in the world
herself, while she prepares every thing

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proper for the infant she bears, and whose nurse she fully intends to be.— Oh! for a heart, for a fortune to deserve such a woman! What man would not marry, were he but sure of meeting with such an angel as mine?—After all, however, I cannot think to whom I am obliged for these fine offers. I have no friends in the ministry; that is, I do not know I have—I never attempted to make interest for what I never designed to accept. Strange mysteries to me these proceedings!—But I have determined to have nothing to do with the offered appointment; it is quite immaterial to me from what quarter it comes: yet I fancy that Lucy can guess, though she will not tell me.—Whenever I discover any curiosity about it, she replies, —“’Tis better not to make enquiries: “ by searching into some things, we very

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“ much misemploy our time. While
“ we are happy in our retreat, nothing
“ can hurt us.”

I always subscribe to such sentiments
as these : but I should like to know the
concealed friend to

Your

C. FRANKLAND.



LETTER LI.

Mrs. STANLEY to Mrs. FORBES.

WHAT a couple of stupid crea-
tures are Lady Lucy and her
man ! There is no making the least im-
pression

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pression upon them. I never yet met with a man totally insensible to a fine woman's advances, though he had a handsome mistress or wife of his own. Most men like a little change. Variety is the very soul of pleasure: but this Frankland is so entirely attached to his wife, who is fit only to go tame about the house, and breed, that there is no drawing him from her. I have gone as far as I well could, without absolutely exposing myself: he is insensible to *me*; yet he by no means wants either understanding or penetration, and I do not care to be an object of contempt and ridicule to a man who, in spite of his neglect, commands esteem and respect from every woman. Such a man cannot be imposed upon: he sees through all our arts, and reads our very souls. Such a man may sometimes be lured, but
never

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never can be driven to any thing. This Frankland—What a provoking devil!— is capable of resisting every temptation: My brother, who is in love with Lady Lucy to madness, I think, made use of all his interest to procure a place for her husband in the West Indies, on purpose to send him out of the way, in order to see what effect his absence would have on her; but he, at once, refused an employment which would have sent him to a distance from her. He would not hear of it. Sir George then thought that a *place* which would keep him from his Lucy several hours in the day, would be better than no employment; and, with great difficulty, procured a promise of the first vacancy in the Treasury. This stupid man, however, dead to ambition, as to every other pleasurable passion, has positively

F 4. declined

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declined it. He will not accept of either of the appointments promised; there is, consequently, no hope of making any thing of him: I shall not, therefore, condescend to trouble myself any farther about him.—Sir George, I believe, will not give up Lady Lucy so easily: he actually raves about her, and declares, he never beheld a woman so exquisitely pleasing. I cannot, certainly, be of *his* opinion; but men are strange judges of beauty. However, he will not find himself successful with her. He may fancy himself as handsome as Frankland, but he is vastly mistaken; they are not to be mentioned at the same time; it would be the idlest thing in the world to make a comparison between them. I think, indeed, that Sir George had better give himself no farther trouble about a woman whose ideas
are

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are so confined, and who has degraded herself beyond expression, by sitting down in such a mean, contemptible style of life. What a depraved taste must she have! and yet when I think of her charming fellow, I am half ready to excuse her; surely such a person, and such a carriage, are sufficient apologies for her conduct: had I not thought so, I should not have gone such lengths. He cannot be ignorant of his uncommon attractions—he *must* know that those attractions command attention, excite admiration, and inspire love: those attractions will, I hope, plead in my favour, and make him shew some consideration for me, if I act ever so absurdly under the influence of them. Our ears are ever open to flattery; we find it always irresistible. The silent, but sincere compliments we pay people when

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we render ourselves ridiculous on their account, are such undeniable proofs of their powers of pleasing, that they cannot but receive the highest satisfaction from them. I hope, therefore, I have nothing to apprehend from Frankland. His good nature, good sense, accompanied with that self-love which is inherent in us all, will save me from the censures he might otherwise level at me.—As to his wife—for I suppose he tells *her* every thing—*she* has, perhaps, vanity enough to be pleased to find her husband insensible to much handsomer women than herself. Her vanity upon this occasion may make her impertinent; I shall, therefore, get out of her way, and go to London—The variety of amusements there may help to put this fine fellow out of the head of

Your C. STANLEY.

L. E. T.

L E T T E R LII.

Lady BELL to Lady LUCY.

I Have not wrote to you for a long time, because I waited to see how Lord Ashbourne would conduct himself; as I think it very unfair to form hasty—consequently, rash—judgments of people: but really the poor man looks so ready to hang himself, that I pity him exceedingly; and pity being nearly allied to love, I begin to doubt whether I do not feel more tenderness for him than ever. This perplexes us both: for he does not know what to make of me. When he first came here, he was, I suppose, in hopes that I should be hurt by his long absence, take huff, quarrel with him, and send him back again.

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On the contrary, I received him with all the mildness and good nature imaginable. I did not say a single word against his long absence: I smiled, and spoke so civilly to him, that he seemed at a loss to discover what I meant. He bowed, and sighed; opened his mouth to speak, and shut it immediately without speaking. It was not *my* business, you know, to ask questions; by so doing I should have discovered a weakness of which, - I hope, I never shall be guilty. In this manner we went on for several days; he visited me regularly, attended me to the opera, *comédie*, &c.—wherever I chose to go indeed—almost mechanically: yet he seldom, in all this time, spoke but when he could not avoid it. A forced smile, a polite offer of his hand—those were the only signs of his existence which I could discover;

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cover ; and if I had not sometimes touched his hand, in extricating myself out of difficulties, I might really have concluded him to be nothing except a mere phantom. However, as *sprits* converse sometimes (you know) I began to think he might entertain me, at least, by telling me what I wanted to hear, if he could say nothing more agreeable.

One morning, when we were in a yawning *tête à tête*, I said to him—
“ Your Lordship has been returned
“ above ten days, I believe, without
“ mentioning a word about Miss Plaw.
“ stow.”

He started—repeated the much-loved name — sighed ; and was silent.

“ Is

“ Is she a pretty woman, my Lord ? ”
added I, briskly.

“ *Pretty*, Madam, is too inexpressive
“ a word for such a face, for such a
“ form as hers,” replied he with eager-
ness : “ she is as handsome as any wo-
“ man need to be ; yet her beauty is
“ the smallest part of her charms : she
“ is more than a *beauty* ; she is the most
“ agreeable creature in the world.”

“ Umph—” answered I, with a spite-
ful air ; “ surely she must have a vast
“ many lovers, if she is so pleasing.”

He started again ; looked earnestly at
me ; then fetched a deep sigh, and said,
in a low voice, “ She has a lover in
“ every man who sees her.”

“ This

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“ That is pretty freely confessing,” thought I, “ that you are one of the “ number : but I will not seem to see “ any thing till I am told of it.”—I, therefore, dropped the subject—We now go on just in the old way. Will he seal up his lips for ever ? I actually fancy he will—yet his silence will do him no good, if it does him no harm : he cannot forward his connection with me, if he never talks about it, for I shall, certainly, never ask him to marry me : it must come entirely from himself, if it comes at all.—Pray tell me, if you can, how Miss Plastow bears his departure from her ; tell me also if they correspond, as I choose not to be thought inquisitive by him about any thing.

I pass my time tolerably here ; but if Lord Ashbourne, who is, notwithstanding,

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standing his attachment to Miss Plastow, my constant attendant, was a little more communicative and chearful, I should be much more amused.—But he is thinking of his Louisa.—Why does he not tell me so then? Will he not be guilty of the greatest folly—I was going to say, villany—by attempting to marry *one* woman, when his head and heart are full of *another*? And would he not do me, as well as Miss Plastow, the greatest injustice, by uniting himself to *me*, while he is extremely in love with *her*? Perhaps, indeed, he may have no thoughts of me for a wife—What business has he here then? Why is he always pinned to my side? Why does he not freely communicate the result of his voyage to England? While *he* is silent, *I* shall remain so. I have not once encouraged him, since his return, to believe I am
tenderly

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tenderly attached to him, or to imagine that I will accept of his hand : neither have I declined the acceptance of it. It is his place to ask for mine, if he can take such a step without revolting against his conscience : but, indeed, most men have pretty stretching consciences. I am glad you have not found them so : Mr. Frankland seems to be the right sort of man to marry ; and as you have not yet had any reason to repent of your condescension, I hope you never will. I begin to think your plan not quite so romantic ; and were I to meet with a man as much to *my* mind as Mr. Frankland is to yours, I may, possibly, take him ; but till then—Lord Ashbourne, as he chooses to dangle, may as well keep his place. Till he is more explicit, I have nothing more to do than to behave to him in my usual manner, with
which

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which neither he nor Miss Plaftow, nor any body, can find fault. If there are people impertinent enough to blame my behaviour, I fhall not trouble my head about them: I fhould be glad, however, to know what my friends and acquaintance in London fay of me. If you are not entirely ruflicated yourfelf, you will hear their fentiments concerning me; and when you *have* heard them, you may very fafely communicate them to

Your affectionate

A. WALLACE.

L E T;

L E T T E R LIII.

MR. FRANKLAND to MR. DESBOROUGH.

MY dearest Lucy is, at last, I thank heaven, delivered from her apprehensions, and I from my anxieties on *her* account. She is brought to bed of a very fine boy, and is in uncommon health and spirits, considering her situation. I want words to express the pleasure I feel upon this happy occasion: the pleasure which I feel to see my dear creature take upon her the employment of a mother. How very few in *her* station of life choose to trouble themselves with the care of their offspring! My Lucy, though highly born, and tenderly bred, with all the dignity becoming her birth, and with all the delicacy attending her education, discovers a satisfaction,

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tisfaction, an alacrity in nursing her son, which sufficiently shews the propriety of her sentiments. She is, certainly, not only the most charming of women, but the best of wives, and will be a pattern for mothers. Few women, blest with the most affluent fortunes, and married even beyond their expectations, are contented with their situations; they are still aiming to eclipse some friend or acquaintance, in dress, equipage, or entertainments. My Lucy, on the other hand, though married so infinitely beneath her merit—for I can never think myself deserving of her—is satisfied with every thing, and appears the happiest of women—May it be ever in *my* power to make her so!

I am particularly glad to find that Mrs. Bowen, the rector's wife, proves so agreeable

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able to her. A good-natured, sensible person of her own sex is absolutely necessary for her, and should be often with her at this interesting time, as she has no female relation or friend near her. Our friends, indeed, both male and female, when they found that we were not likely to increase our fortunes by our marriage, and that we should not keep open house for them, deserted us all at once, and I can truly say that we have lost all our acquaintance, except yourself. My wife, indeed, corresponds with Lady Bell Wallace, and Miss Plafrow; but I much question whether the former, on her return to England, will condescend to look upon us. As to our new acquaintance, we do not wish to have any connections of consequence with them, were they ever so willing.

Mrs.

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Mrs. Stanley has removed herself to London ; a place she is more fitted to enjoy than the tranquillity of a country village. Sir George is here, backwards and forwards : he would have been very intimate ; but soon saw that an intimacy would be, by no means, agreeable. My Lucy and I, both, discouraged him as much as possible.—He seems, however, strongly inclined, notwithstanding all the discouragements he has received, to be troublesome. He has put one of the prettiest girls you ever saw to board with our worthy rector : Sir George is her guardian, and says, he believes she will be safer with *him* than even with Mrs. Stanley in London.—She comes frequently here with Mrs. Bowen, and has helped my dear industrious Lucy to make some of her baby-cloaths. There is a *naïveté*

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about her which is extremely pleasing. She has taken a great fancy to my wife and me; and tells *me*, while she looks up in my face with the most winning simplicity, that she loves me like a brother. With that kind of affection alone from her I shall be contented, as I have no room in my heart for any woman but my Lucy. It would be, indeed, criminal in me to think of any other.—No—I can only think of *her* who is so inestimable a blessing to

Your sincere friend,

C. FRANKLAND,

LET-

L E T T E R L I V .

From the same to the same.

I OUGHT to have thanked you before for your friendly congratulations, as well as for your intended present to my boy ; but the little gipsy I mentioned in my last letter, Maria Waters, Sir George's Ward, is ever hindering me from doing any thing but what she has a mind to.—She tells me, while she leans over my shoulder, that she will spare me to no body except her dear Lady Lucy. This playful girl really amuses—without *her* company, indeed, I should pass many a lonely hour, as I am deprived, in a great measure, of the conversation of my wife, who can make herself amends by caressing

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teasing our dear little boy, when I am not permitted to be with her. At such times Maria diverts me either with her lively chat, or her melodious voice, or her musical instruments. She sings in a very pathetic style to her guitar; and sometimes I, at her desire, accompany her on the harpsichord: but all her arts, though they are, I believe, very innocent ones, cannot draw me a single moment from my amiable, my valuable Lucy; a thousand times more valuable by being the mother, the nurse of my son.—She sends for me.

IN CONTINUATION.

Sir George Caswell has been here, to wish me joy of my son, and has insisted upon naming him. — “I do not, how-

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“ ever,

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With the best natured smile in the world he replied — “I thought to have had the satisfaction of performing the ceremony of baptism over the young gentleman.”

“Mr. Ashton,” (he is the Curate) answered I, “can represent you for once.”

I then gave him my reasons for not accepting Sir George’s offer.

“I am afraid,” said he, “that Sir George may be offended with me: I have no intention, indeed, to court his favour; but I would not willingly affront any of my parishioners.”

I told him, that I thought my desiring him to stand godfather to my son could
not

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not affront any body : — “ If you chuse
“ to decline it, I must submit : but I
“ assure you, I never meant to put you
“ to any expence. I am chiefly induced
“ to desire *you* to be godfather to my
“ boy, as I think *you*, in consequence
“ of your sacred function, are best qua-
“ lified for the trust to be reposed in
“ you ; for instructing your young
“ charge in the first principles of re-
“ ligion.”

He seemed pleased with my looking upon the baptismal ceremony in the serious light in which it ought to be considered, and at last agreed to my request. — My Lucy is very much pleased with his compliance. — Now I am prepared for Sir George. In the mean time I am, as usual,

Yours sincerely, C. F.

G 3

L. E. T.

LETTER LV.

Miss PLASTOW to Lady Lucy
FRANKLAND.

I HAVE not been deceived in you, dear Lady Lucy, since I imputed your long silence to the right cause, and now give your Ladyship and Mr. Frankland joy on the birth of your son.

I have been exceedingly agitated by the receipt of a letter from Lord Ashbourne. I will own, however, that it gave me great pleasure: yet, as it is a pleasure I ought not to reckon upon, I am afraid to indulge it. It is really a charming letter: there is so much good sense, and so much tenderness in it, that I could dwell upon it for ever. He
tells

tells me that his heart frequently revolts against a step that at first appeared to him perfectly right, though it cost him an infinite deal of pain to comply with it: he tells me he now repents sincerely of that step, and is every hour more convinced of the impropriety, of the injustice indeed, of his conduct. He adds, "It is impossible for me any longer to support a character foreign to my heart: I will lay open that heart to Lady Bell, and disclose my sentiments for *you*; at the same time I will declare my readiness to perform my engagements to *her*." Lady Bell therefore will be soon informed of the true state of the case, know how to act in a situation the most delicate, perhaps, in female life. If she still continues determined to keep me to my first engagements;

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“ I must submit to it, though my sub-
“ mission to it will make me the most
“ miserable of men.—Should she give
“ me up after all—what transport in
“ the thought! — I will hasten imme-
“ diately, and throw myself and my
“ fortune at your feet.”

What a transporting conclusion of
his letter! — But I am afraid to see
him in the situation he wishes to appear
before me.

Tell me now, Lady Lucy, is there
any thing so very extravagant in what
Lord Ashbourne has proposed? Would
he not act very unlike a man of ho-
nour, by pretending to love *one* woman;
when his whole soul is devoted to *an-
other*? Lady Bell Wallace surely can-
not be happy with a man who freely
con-

confesses he prefers another woman to *her*—It is, I am satisfied, but a poor compliment to make to a fine young Lady: but is it not the truth? and should it not be told, however ungrateful the communication of it may be to the parties concerned in it? Are you not of my opinion, dear Lady Lucy? And do you not esteem Lord Ashbourne for this charming openness of temper? He will not deceive either Lady Bell or me. I own I cannot but be pleased with a conduct that must be thought laudable by every disinterested person. This pleases me, because I might be partial to a man who is, I think, not only worthy of my entire affection, but whom, I have been told, from my infancy, to love and esteem.

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I should be exceedingly glad to be favoured with your Ladyship's sentiments upon these subjects; and am, with compliments to Mr. Frankland upon the late joyful occasion,

Your Ladyship's

most obedient servant,

L. PLASTOW.

L E T T E R LVI

Mr. FRANKLAND to Mr. DESBOROUGH.

I HAVE been most luckily helped out at a pinch, when I could not have expected it.

Yesterday

Yesterday a very genteel post-chaise and four drove up to our door. Such an equipage, Desborough, does not often appear before our humble habitation. Out jumped as genteel a young fellow as I have seen for some time. He introduced himself by saying, that though he had not the honour of being personally acquainted with me, he was happy in being known to Lady Lucy. After having made a polite enquiry after *her* health, and her little son's, he added, that his name was Fanshaw; that he was a near neighbour of Mrs. Selby's; and that he had promised her to pay his respects to Lady Lucy and me in his way to London, being on the point of setting out for Paris; to which place he should be very ready to carry any of her Ladyship's commands, or mine.

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I recollected immediately that this must be the very man of whom I had been so apprehensive before my dearest girl would consent to be united to me by the strongest ties; and as he again assured me that he was in haste to leave England, I readily conducted him to my wife. He behaved to her with a respectful kind of friendship which could not but be very pleasing. He caressed my boy more than once, wished that he was his; and added, that in order to bring him as near him as possible, he should be extremely glad to be his godfather. He then produced a letter from Mrs. Selby, wherein she communicated to Lady Lucy her design to be his godmother.

My dear Lucy looked at me for my approbation, and received it directly.

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As Mr. Fanshaw's stay here, then, must be very short, I beg you will be with me to-morrow; you shall return as soon as you please: let me tell you, however, that you must not expect any other entertainment than such as farmers ought to give. I am quite pleased that it is in my power to refuse Sir George, without making Mr. Bowen uneasy, who will now perform the ceremony instead of his curate. I *could* have asked Harry Swymmer; but though both he and his sister appeared willing to forward my union with Lady Lucy, they have not since behaved in the most agreeable manner: they are, both of them, too much attached to the world, and all its parade and nonsense, not to think that Lady Lucy and I might have been much happier, might have acted, at least, much wiser, by giving up, what
they

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they call, a romantic plan of life (tho' it has been to us productive of the truest felicity) and marrying persons the most unsuitable and disagreeable to us, merely for the sake of affluent circumstances.—What different, what thwarting ideas have people of *prudent matches*!—All my ambition is to be happy, and to make my dear girl so, who has often declared that her every wish is gratified.—Charming creature! It is her own heavenly temper which makes her so contented with *me*, so pleased with every thing about her. She has just sent to me, to beg me to put off Sir George immediately; fearing that, in consequence of a delay, he should presume on the acceptance of his offer. I will close my letter when I return.

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IN CONTINUATION.

Sir George pretended to be very much affronted at my rejecting his offer: so much the better: we shall now get rid of him, I hope.

Expecting to see you soon, I remain,

Ever yours,

C. F.

LETTER LVII.

Lady BELL to Lady LUCY.

NOT having received any answer to my last letter, I begin to fear that you are indisposed, or that something still worse than illness has happened

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pened to you.—However, while I wait in hopes of hearing better news than my apprehensions will give me leave to expect, let me proceed with the history of Lord Ashbourne,—I continued, as I told you I would, to treat him with such a negligence, that if he had really any tenderness for me, it must have roused him; but though he remained long insensible to me, his affection for Miss Plaffow at last did the business.

We were, a few evenings ago, in a *tête a tête* party by accident; as neither of us thought of contriving such an interview; and, indeed, both seemed equally puzzled how to support a conversation that was sufficiently languid on my side, and very much interrupted on his side by sighs and monosyllables, I sat knotting in a careless attitude; he sat

sat playing with a *bouquet*, which, for want of something else, he had taken out of his bosom : yet he every now and then cast a sly look at me, as if he was afraid of being caught in doing what he should not : at length, after having pushed out the profoundest sigh you ever heard, and laying down his flowers, while his eyes and all his attitudes appeared to implore my pity, he addressed me in the following manner—" I have, " for some time, Lady Bell, ever since " my return, indeed, wished to open " my heart to you : but shame, fear— " and a number of contending passions, " in short, added to the consciousness I " felt of making a very ridiculous, if not " a very censurable appearance in your " eyes, have hitherto kept me silent ; but " my silence has cost me so much, that I " must now give a vent to my feelings, " and

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“ and rely on your pardon, from your
“ good sense and candour, for having
“ so long concealed them from you.—
“ When I had first the honour of being
“ acquainted with you, I had never
“ seen, never conversed with any wo-
“ man half so lovely, half so agreeable.
“ Transported with your charms, I
“ sought your friendship, I sighed for
“ your love; I knew, indeed, that my
“ father had solemnly promised I should
“ marry his ward; but being an entire
“ stranger to Miss Plastow’s attractions,
“ not having seen her since she was a
“ child, and finding an increase of plea-
“ sure in *your* society, I believed it im-
“ possible for me to comply with an en-
“ gagement to which I felt an invin-
“ cible repugnance. I, therefore, de-
“ termined to go over to England, and
“ put an end to it by honestly telling
“ the

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“ the Lady that my heart was not in
“ my own power : naturally concluding
“ she would, in consequence of such a
“ disclosure, be glad to break with me,
“ as I was to quit her : but when I saw
“ the face, when I heard the voice of
“ *her* whom I had resolved to relinquish
“ for ever, the change which I felt in
“ my bosom is not to be described : my
“ rising tenderness for her, my remorse
“ at the thoughts of leaving *you*, and
“ the utter confusion I was in, are be-
“ yond description.—In short, Madam,
“ I felt myself ashamed, confounded,
“ distressed to the greatest degree—I
“ scarce dared to lift up my eyes to *her*
“ who was, I soon found, to be the arbitress
“ of my future fate. I imagined, in-
“ deed, that the flame which the lovely
“ Plastow had kindled in my breast
“ would have consumed me, in its con-
“ sum-
“ fine-

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“ finement ; but the gentle girl remov-
“ ed my terrors, with the mildest, most
“ encouraging complacency, and raised
“ my hopes to a pitch far beyond my
“ expectations. Filial obedience, a
“ most affectionate attention, at least,
“ to the commands of a tender parent,
“ though not existing, considerably
“ prompted her, I will venture to say,
“ to wish for an alliance with the man
“ whom he had chosen for her, and for
“ whom, though in a manner unknown,
“ she had, in opposition to numerous
“ solicitations, reserved herself. Was it
“ possible for me, Lady Bell, thus situ-
“ ated, any longer to resist the power-
“ ful allurements levelled against me?
“ My late father’s promises to Mr.
“ Plastow, his strict injunctions to me
“ to look upon that promise as sacred,
“ the dear, dutiful girl’s apprehensions
“ of

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“ of her not being able religiously to
“ comply with the same promise ex-
“ acted from her by a dying parent,
“ added to her own prepossessions in
“ my favour, all conspired to make me
“ false to my first vows. The recollec-
“ tion of my infidelity always forces
“ sighs from my bosom, and fills me
“ with the deepest regret. As I am now
“ circumstanced, therefore, I cannot;
“ dare not pretend to the honour of
“ your hand : I am totally unworthy
“ of it ; it ought to be reserved for the
“ man who can love *you* alone. I am
“ as little worthy of Miss Plastow’s af-
“ fection, as I must come to her a fickle,
“ inconstant character : yet as things are
“ in this situation, I cannot alter them ;
“ I cannot new-make myself—I sincere-
“ ly own that I think myself quite un-
“ deserving of you both ; something,
“ how-

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“ however, assures me that Miss Pla-
“ stow can deign to accept of me. I
“ shall never forfeit her good opinion.
“ I shall adore her to the last moment
“ of my existence.—Pardon me, Lady
“ Bell”—added he, seeing me—or fan-
cying that he saw me—mortified at his
pretty confession: for I suppose I looked
rather silly—though he—a wretch—was
the only person who ought to have appear-
ed abashed. — “ Pardon me, Lady Bell,
“ for the effusions of my heart, which,
“ at this moment, reproaches me for
“ thus freely discovering its secret feel-
“ ings in your presence—but I could
“ not suppress the feelings of my heart
“ any longer; I could not bring myself
“ to continue in the character of a fi-
“ nished hypocrite. *You*, Madam, will
“ ever have my sincerest esteem, whe-
“ ther you can condescend to forgive me
“ or

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“ or not ; but Miss Plaffow,” added he, with the most insolent rapture sparkling in his eyes, “ must ever possess my tenderest love.”

Here he ceased speaking. — I had been prepared for all this : I had even wished to have it over ; yet I looked like a fool ; I actually did not, at first, know what to say to him. I was not in love with him, however — Surely, so frank a discovery of his sentiments was sufficient to cure me of the prepossessions I had entertained in his favour : but I am afraid that few women, if any, Lady Lucy, could have heard such a declaration against themselves, with more composure than I did Lord Ashbourne’s *free effusions*. Resolving, indeed, to put the best face I could upon the matter, I, with a sort of a forced smile,

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smile, replied — “ Your Lordship has
“ told me no news, in this parading
“ communication of your sentiments
“ with regard to *me*—I have, ever since
“ your return from England, seen a
“ very great change in you; and you
“ may be assured, that if you and the
“ Lady, to whom you are at present so
“ violently attached, can be satisfied,
“ your alliance will give me no unea-
“ siness. I rather think myself lucky
“ in being released from an engagement
“ with a man of so volatile a disposition;
“ a man so addicted to inconstancy; espe-
“ cially as your Lordship, by being the
“ deserter, has complimented me with
“ the preservation of my character (as *my*
“ constancy has evidently been unshaken)
“ which might not have happened, had
“ not our connection been on the point
“ of dissolution.”

He

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He looked at me as if he did not, or would not, understand me; and, by this time, I thought I had been rather too flippant. I really began to feel for him, and thought his situation was an uncommonly awkward one. I, therefore, treated him with the utmost frankness; told him, that I had for some time known his inclination for Miss Plafow, and had only waited for the intelligence from himself; adding, that I had also heard she was very amiable, and that I sincerely wished him happy with her.

This change in my behaviour produced an instantaneous one in his Lordship. He seized my hand with almost as much transport as if it had been his Louisa's, called me generous, noble creature, and begged I would grant him,

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If I could ever restore him to my good opinion, my friendship; which it should be his perpetual study to deserve.

I told him I would, provided he, in return, would procure me the friendship of the Lady in question.

I asked nothing more of him: he promised to comply with my request, saying, that Miss Plastow had too much sense, too much discernment, to refuse me. He will now, I suppose, make all possible haste to England, in order to complete the happiness of the lovely Plastow.

And now, my dear Lucy, do you not pity me for the loss of this fickle fellow? His behaviour to *me* would deter some women from ever listening to
a man :

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a man : and indeed, I think I ought to be very careful about my carriage to a man a second time. I even begin to imagine that I never had any pretensions to *person*, and go, mechanically, to the glass twenty times in a day, to see whether it has undergone a considerable alteration, and almost start at finding my complexion as clear, my eyes as lively, and my teeth as white as ever. So, my dear, you see my being forsaken is entirely the fault of this inconstant man. May *you* always find your Frankland of a different humour. If you are really alive, and able to write to me ; if you are not utterly buried in obscurity, let me know what the world says of me. I should not chuse to be looked upon as a slighted woman, though in a slighted situation most certainly is.

Your affectionate A. WALLACE.

LETTER LVIII.

MR. FRANKLAND to MR. DESBOROUGH.

I CANNOT sit down to write to you, without repeating my own thanks and Lady Lucy's, for your kindness in being godfather to my little Charles. I could absolutely make myself ridiculous, by expatiating in the pretty fellow's praise. I will check my paternal effusions, however; I will keep them under till you become a parent yourself—then laugh at me if you can.

I have been a good deal vexed since you left us—Maria, whom I took to be quite a little innocent, has turned out an arrant gipsy. She was placed at the Parsonage, it seems, on purpose to draw

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draw me from my Lucy. I thought indeed, at first sight of her, that she had something about her which did not thoroughly accord with the affected simplicity of her behaviour: young, however, pleasing to an uncommon degree, and eager to render herself engaging, she allures the eye, and fixes the attention, before you can be aware of the mischief she may do you. Fortunately, I found her out time enough to be upon my guard: I always fancied she was particularly busy about *me*: I would not willingly indulge a censurable vanity; but she really appeared to be entirely indiscreet; more so, at least, than any girl of character ought to be: yet I confess I was taken in by her affected *naïveté*, and mistook all her art for nature. She was ever very assiduous to please me before Lady Lucy's confine-

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ment; when she was safe in her bed, she then began to shew herself, but in a gradual manner.—Now, as the trying of a fine girl naturally attracts the attention of the most insensible man, I own I was sometimes tempted to trifle with her again, though I actually meant to do so most innocently : she drew me on, however, by permitting me to take one liberty after another, till I became almost intoxicated with the pleasing folly. I forgot every thing, except my dear, my ever-loved Lucy ; I never lost sight of *her*; *she* was ever present to my imagination: her image rose to my mind in all the dignity of virtuous tenderness, when I was most in danger from this seducing girl. — While she hung over me one day, in the playfullest attitude imaginable, one hand being thrown across my shoulder, the other wantonly

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wantonly employed in turning a ringlet of my hair, I started up, and pushed her hastily from me, just when her lips were ready to meet mine. I hope I should have had as much fortitude, if my heart had not been unalterably attached to my wife. I should, at any time, have despised myself for taking an improper advantage of unguarded innocence.—My *supposed* innocent companion, on my pushing her from me, walked away immediately, without moving her head towards me, and hurried out of the room. I then determined to shun her very carefully for the future.—I did so; I kept from Mrs. Bowen's for several days; but as she frequently called upon my wife, I could not avoid seeing her.—I behaved to her, however, with great reserve: at first she affected not to perceive the change in my carriage,

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and renewed her former familiarities ; yet finding they would not do, she grew serious ; dejected indeed, though her visits to me were more frequent. Still I took no other notice of her than what common civility required.

My Lucy now quitted her apartment, and sat in the parlour as usual. Miss Waters came and brought her work.

Having been at play one morning with my boy, Maria, who sat looking at us, attempted to attract my attention, by careffing the child : but as I chose to let her see that I would not encourage any farther freedoms, I gave my boy to his mother, took my hat, and walked into the garden. She followed me instantly. I let her see that I wished to avoid her, but she pursued me.

me. When I came to the part of my grounds from which, you know, there is an opening to the meadows, I went out at the door, and was going to lock it after me, in order to secure my retreat. — “Hold, Sir,” cried she, stopping me, with great agitation, “hear me a moment: it will be the last time I shall ever trouble you; but I cannot bear to leave you, while you harbour a bad opinion of me, though I am in some shape deserving of censure. I have been put upon acting a part,” added she, with a voice softened by her tears, and still more agitated, “for which I now condemn myself, as I am convinced of the folly, of the baseness of it; yet I hope you will pardon me, and not think amiss of me, Mr. Frankland, when I tell you, that had you not deeply touched my

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“ wished to be admired and caressed
“ more than my companions. Sir George
“ decoyed me from home upon a party
“ of pleasure, and prevailed on me to
“ drink a quantity of warm liquor af-
“ ter dancing. There was certainly
“ something infused into it; for my
“ ideas were soon in a disordered state,
“ and, in consequence of that state, I
“ was totally in the power of my se-
“ ducer. When I first discovered my
“ unhappy situation, I raved, wept,
“ and thought myself the most misera-
“ ble of human beings; but my un-
“ doer found a way to soothe and to
“ calm me; by presents, and by a ten-
“ derness, which, had it continued,
“ would have made me more satisfied
“ with my condition, though it never
“ could have reconciled me to my fate;
“ nor should I at first have listened to
“ him,

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“ him, had I not been afraid to go
“ home to my father.—Reflecting, con-
“ vered with shame, on what was past,
“ and dreading ill treatment at home
“ after my criminal proceeding, I con-
“ sented to live with Sir George in the
“ manner he desired; that is, in the
“ most retired manner, in a small village
“ within a few miles of London. There
“ I was gradually neglected by him;
“ but he furnished me with money
“ enough for a genteel subsistence, in
“ a private way. In that way indeed
“ I was far from being happy, and my
“ recollections were sufficiently painful,
“ to render me less so: yet I was afraid
“ to quarrel with my supporter, lest he
“ should withdraw his allowance. At
“ last, however, I told him plainly, that
“ I was tired of my situation, and that
“ I imagined he would be glad to get
“ rid

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“ rid of me; adding, that he might
“ easily do so, if he would only con-
“ sent to settle on me, for my life, a
“ quarter of what he at that time al-
“ lowed me: assuring him also, that I
“ would go down into Leicestershire,
“ and never trouble him again.

“ He made me no reply for some
“ moments — After a long pause, he
“ said — I will consider of it. — I
“ saw no more of him for a fort-
“ night — He then returned, and in-
“ formed me that he would agree to
“ what I had requested, upon one condi-
“ tion.

“ I begged earnestly to hear what I
“ was required to do for the purchase
“ of a competency; but could not help
“ lamenting, at the same time, the loss
“ of my innocence.

“ You

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“ You are a little simpleton, said
“ he—you may be as innocent as ever
“ if you please—you must assume the
“ character in which you first appeared
“ to me, as I want you to draw, by
“ your simplicity and apparent artless-
“ ness, a married man from one of the
“ most winning women in the world.

“ I sighed, and told him that I was
“ totally unfit for such a task.

“ I must give you up then, said he;
“ for you have long been a burden to
“ me. You cannot expect to be sup-
“ ported for nothing.

“ I sighed again, wept, and intreated
“ Sir George to pity me, and to spare
“ me so hard an undertaking, which nei-
“ ther suited my capacity nor principles;
“ but he only ridiculed me, and told me
“ I had

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“ I had learnt a great deal of unnecessary
“ refinement since I had left the farm. It
“ was to no purpose that I assured him I
“ had learnt every thing bad of *him*, as I
“ knew no harm before I knew him; he
“ would hear of nothing but my imme-
“ diate compliance with his design; and
“ threatened to reduce me immediately to
“ misery and want, if I persisted in a re-
“ fusai.—It is needless to say that I con-
“ sented to his new desires. Placing me
“ as a ward of his with Mrs. Bowen, she,
“ at *his* request, introduced me to *you* and
“ Lady Lucy. The first appearance of
“ your charming figure struck me; but
“ when I became more acquainted with
“ your manners, when I heard you play,
“ sing, and converse, my senses were all
“ enchanted; I forgot the resolution I
“ had made never to enter again into a
“ criminal connection. Being taken up
“ with

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“ with the delightful sensation arising from
“ the endeavours to please — flattering
“ myself also, that my endeavours promised success, till the day you threw me
“ from you with disdain ; with a disdain
“ which pierced my soul. — I hoped, at
“ first, I had been deceived : I hoped
“ that some instantaneous change of manner, some sudden indisposition had
“ seized you, and that you would be gentle and kind to me again : but when I saw
“ that you shunned me, that you was reserved, and offended, I thought I could
“ not bear it any longer : I could not
“ support the idea of your hating me :
“ and when I found I could not lure
“ you back to the tenderness with
“ which you *bad* treated me, I wished
“ to discover all : I determined to make
“ an attempt to gain your esteem ;
“ hoping to move your pity, at least, if
“ unable to obtain your love.—I cannot,
“ indeed,

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“ indeed, without being guilty of a criminal inclination, wish for your love;
“ I must, therefore, learn *not* to wish for it: but I cannot—(continued she, lifting up her eyes with a timid softness in them)—I cannot take leave of you, Sir, for ever, without begging you to pardon a poor girl for being only too readily charmed with your fine person, and accomplishments, for being captivated with that engaging behaviour which must, necessarily, affect the most insensible, without begging you also to conceal from Sir George all that I have related: he will soon see (added she, with a sigh) that I could not succeed, and I will leave *him*, I will leave this place for ever, whether he is generous enough to provide for me or not: but I could not think of removing myself from him till I had, in some measure,
“ tried

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“ tried to atone for my folly by making
“ these confessions and intreaties.”

Here Maria closed her little narrative
—I was struck with a behaviour so un-
common : perhaps I was flattered by
the compliments she paid me. Where,
is the man proof against the insinuating
wiles of the insinuating sex ? To speak
the honest truth, I was not at all satis-
fied at finding myself so pleased with
this artful girl’s confession ; and yet
my indignation against Sir George soon
got the better of every other emotion. I
told her that I should think no more of
what was past—I meant *her* part of it—
but she mistook my meaning, I believe,
and imagined that I should resent Sir
George’s behaviour ; for she requested
me, in the most pathetic terms, not to
endanger my valuable life (as she called
it)

it) — “ I shall then,” added she, “ think
 “ I have, by making this discovery,
 “ been guilty of a greater crime than I
 “ have yet committed.” She almost
 melted me by the tenderness of her fears,
 and the extreme delicacy with which she
 expressed them — “ If you pay no regard
 “ to your own safety, Mr. Frankland,”
 said she, “ yet for Lady Lucy’s sake
 “ preserve a life so deservedly dear to
 “ her: such a character as Sir George’s
 “ is unworthy of your attention. He
 “ may try to injure, but he never *can*
 “ injure such a mind as her Lady-
 “ ship’s.” — She talked, in short, so
 finely, so feelingly, that I began to think
 it quite necessary for us to separate — I
 rose, therefore, to go — She then in-
 treated me to let her out at the little
 gate, that she might return to Mrs.
 Bowen over the meadows. She quitted
 me

me with tears in her eyes, and I went slowly towards the house.

On my return, I found my Lucy sitting in the parlour where I had left her: she looked, I imagined, unusually serious. My head too was full of what I had just heard. Taking her in my arms with a tenderness which I had not till that moment experienced, and pressing her lips to my face, I thought I felt a pearly drop upon her cheek.

“What’s the matter with my life?” said I, looking anxiously at her.

“Nothing, my dear Mr. Frankland,” replied she, with the sweetest smile; “nothing but an extraordinary flow of affection.”

“Give

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“ Give it vent then, my angel,” said I, pressing her still closer : my heart was full : I feared that I had, only by trifling with Maria, injured the best of creatures. I felt an indignation against the former, notwithstanding her pretended infatuation for me, which I could scarcely suppress ; and I determined, one day, to make my wife acquainted with every thing. Just at that time, however, I fancied I should soften her too much. There was a tender kind of dejection in her countenance, which filled me with great anxiety of which I never had been before sensible. At times I could not help fancying that my anxiety was owing to my remorse, for having trifled with this poor, unfortunate, weak girl : I really pity her, but I wish I had never seen her. How much has Sir George to answer for, by having seduced

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duced her from her duty to her family, to the world, and to herself! No man, I think, can be vindicated, who decoys an ignorant, innocent young creature from the peaceful situation, the happy situation in which providence had placed her.—Had she not been deluded by him, she might have lived the darling of her parents, the delight of her friends, and the exemplary companion of her young female neighbours and acquaintance. What a cruel change has an abandoned libertine produced in the mind of this pitiable girl! how has he perverted her principles! how has he corrupted her manners! When he had, by the basest of all methods, deprived her of her senses, he effectually excluded all resistance; and when her person was once polluted, her mind was soon in a condition to receive any impression her seducer chose

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chose to fix upon it. The wonder is, that as Sir George kept her continually employed in an infamous manner, she ever recovered her former principles, and had resolution enough, finote by repentance, not only to struggle with her contending passions, but to extricate herself from a state of life which would have certainly grown less and less tolerable had she remained in it.—Flatteringly, would she have made me believe that I was the cause of her reformation, by treating her with a reserve and a contempt which opened her eyes, and made her see things in their proper colours. Happy shall I think myself, if I *have been* instrumental to her return to the humble situation from which she was drawn in a manner hardly to be forgiven: at the same time, however, I wish I had never trifled with her, as

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my heart reproaches me for my fooleries, on *her* account, as well as on my wife's. I ought not to have given the slightest encouragement to Maria; I should not have ventured to risque my Lucy's feeling a single moment's uneasiness, though I actually think that my dear Lucy has too much confidence in me, to have the smallest suspicions concerning my fidelity to her: she has too much nobleness of mind to be jealous of the man she has blest with her good opinion. Doubly blameable, therefore, should I be to deceive *her*. How I hate myself for my folly! but it is now at an end: yet I *have* acted a foolish part, and I *must* reflect on that part with sorrow. What weak, imperfect creatures we are!—Well may I pardon Miss Waters, circumstanced as *she* was, when I myself, united to such a wife as Lucy, could

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not withstand the silly temptation of trifling with a love-sick girl—Indeed, Desborough, I am thoroughly out of humour with myself, though ever

Sincerely yours,

C. FRANKLAND.

P. S. Lady Lucy told me, when I had been in some time, that Sir George had made her a visit while I was in the garden. I replied, that I was glad I did not meet with him. She required no explanation of that answer, and I said no more about it.

LET-

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LETTER LIX.

Sir GEORGE CASWELL to Mr. BRANDER.

I Have been the most unlucky fellow in the world in my attack upon Lady Lucy, who has increased my passion for her by an uncommon resistance, and by sentiments, if not new, rarely to be met with: sentiments, indeed, so great—though at the same time so mortifying—that I can hardly believe them to be real.

I told you of the plot I had laid for her, by placing Maria Waters at the Rector's, in hopes of detaching Frankland from his wife, whom I hoped to inspire with repentment, and to aid and assist in the gratification of it, and so

I 2

forth—

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forth—Maria, you know, is a pretty, little toad : she was the most artless of her sex when I first took her : but where is the woman who is long either innocent or ignorant ? They say we spoil them ; but some are certainly ready spoiled to our hands. The following account of my late disappointment will serve to give strength to this assertion. Having charged Maria to take every opportunity of being with Frankland, I chose to allow her time before I appeared myself, that Lady Lucy might not suspect any connection between us. As luck would have it, when I came to Frankland he was not within : his charming wife was sitting in the parlour, employed with her needle. She hardly vouchsafed to rise at my entrance, but looked at me with the coolest indifference : *that* indifference provoked me,

4 perhaps,

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perhaps, to say more than I otherwise should have said. When I had complimented her upon her recovery, I told her I was sorry to see her occupied in a manner so unsuitable to her birth and education.

“ My birth, Sir,” replied she, with a charming spirit, “ ought not to set me above my condition; and every woman’s education ought to make her a useful wife and mother.”

“ What home-bred notions are these, Lady Lucy,” said I, “ for a woman with your person, taste, and accomplishments, to entertain!—But granting that they are laudable in *some* wives, they are absurd in *you*; as every charm, and every virtue you

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“ ever possessed, are thrown away upon
“ a man who is unworthy of you.”

A glow of indignation flushed her
cheek.

“ I will hear no reflections on Mr.
“ Frankland, Sir,” answered she, ris-
ing, to leave the room.

“ Hold, Madam,” said I—“ stay a
“ single moment—Whatever unjust ideas
“ you may have formed of me, I do not,
“ at present, merit them. I will ven-
“ ture my life on what I am now going
“ to tell you : The man for whom you
“ have degraded yourself, for whom
“ you, so condescendingly, perform of-
“ fices for which you never were design-
“ ed, is false ; false, Madam, to your
“ beauty, and to your deserts : he is
“ fondly

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“ fondly attached to a girl so every way
“ inferior to you, that I really wonder
“ at your patience: especially as you
“ are adored by those who have the
“ highest sense of your uncommon at-
“ tractions.”

“ I receive no pleasure,” replied she,
with a kind of sullen countenance at
what I had told her, notwithstanding
her affected unconcern; “ I receive no
“ pleasure from any person’s flatteries:
“ my only wish is, to deserve Mr. Frank-
“ land’s *affections*.”

She then added, after a pause, as if
recollecting herself, “ And I doubt not
“ but that I shall always secure his
“ *esteem*.”

" You must always secure the esteem
 " of the whole world," answered I :
 " nobody but a brute, destitute of sen-
 " sibility, can refuse you his esteem :
 " yet it is an indisputable fact, that Mr.
 " Frankland prefers Miss Waters to
 " your Ladyship : he is, I believe, with
 " *her* at this very moment."

I spoke at random, but I actually
 thought that I guessed right; for she
 blushed, and hung her head a little
 while : then, raising it on a sudden, she
 said, " You may be very right, Sir :
 " Mr. Frankland is so extremely agree-
 " able, that I must not expect to keep
 " him to myself : but this I am sure of,
 " he will never treat me unkindly ; or,
 " *should* he treat me so, I shall still pre-
 " fer him to any other man in the
 " world."

With

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With these words she hurried out of the room : and all my efforts to lure her back again were unsuccessful.

Finding that she would not return, I went away, exceedingly hurt at not having been able to make the slightest impression upon her in my favour. She is really the most extraordinary character I am acquainted with ; few women, either wives or mistresses, who attach themselves so constantly to a man ; to a man who does not love them in return : Lady Lucy is, indeed, of a most amiable disposition, as well as exceedingly lovely in her person and manners. What a treasure is she to this Frankland ! He is very fond of her, I believe, though I have raised all this dust about him. Who the devil would not doat on such a creature ? It is almost criminal to attempt to tease her by such a piece of

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vile deceit as I have practised ; yet, in love and in war, stratagems are fair. Besides, if I treat her with as much tenderness as this Frankland does, she will like nothing by the change : one handsome young fellow is as good as another, I imagine ; and most women think so : but this charming woman differs as much from her sex, by her strange perverseness, as by her personal allurements. I suppose, therefore, that there can be no hopes at present, or very faint ones, for

Your sincere friend,

GEORGE CASWELL.

L E T.

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L E T T E R LX.

Miss PLASTOW to Lady LUGG.

I HAVE just received another letter from Lord Ashbourne; it is the most satisfactory one I have yet seen of his writing. He has opened his whole heart to Lady Bell; she gives him up, and now he is only apprehensive that I should think him incapable of constancy, from having changed merely in consequence of meeting with a woman whom he liked better. However, tho' many objections might be fairly made to such a variegated conduct, I am, I confess, too much prejudiced in his favour, to imagine that I shall ever have reason to repent of my partiality for him. He is certainly very amiable; he

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is the man my father chose for me : ought not my father's choice to carry a strong recommendation with it ? For my part, I own it has great weight with me : but be that as it will, it is a fine thing to have so excellent an apology for the indulgence of my inclination. You would, I am afraid, rank me among the vainest of women, and charge me with being intoxicated with the adulation of my lover, were I to relate the most trifling passages in Lord Ashbourne's letter concerning myself : yet I may tell you—I ought, indeed, to tell you, of the extreme good nature of Lady Bell Wallace. She has behaved, my Lord says, not only with the greatest propriety, but in the most friendly manner to him : and she has spoken things in my praise, which she could have learnt from no body except Lady Lucy :

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cy : to *you* therefore I am, in fact, indebted for them. She wishes me happy with my Lord, and does me the honour to desire my acquaintance and friendship — My Lord speaks of her in the highest terms, in the most respectful terms, and tells me, that no woman ever heard such a declaration as he was obliged to make against herself — and strongly against his will — with so much patience and good humour. She is, I dare say, a great deal handsomer and better than *me*; but while my Lord looks on me with partial eyes, I cannot be unhappy. He talks of coming over immediately : nothing however should prevent my paying your Ladyship my sincere compliments in person, on the re-establishment of your own health, and the continuance of your little son's, if the distance between us at present did not render

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happiness in the marriage-state. I am pleased too, methinks, to find that Lord Ashbourne has behaved with so much frankness, and that *you*, my dear, have listened to reason against yourself with such temper : for, however grating the declaration uttered by his Lordship might have been to your ear, it has, certainly, released you from an infinite deal of anxiety. Where is the woman who can be happy, without possessing the heart of the man whom she marries ?

You ask me what the world says of you ; and you desire me to inform you of the opinions of your friends and acquaintance here concerning your conduct, if I am not quite rusticated.—I am indeed rusticated to such a degree, that I am looked upon as a person totally
dead

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dead to the world—that is, to the polite part of it—absolutely lost in obscurity; you must not, therefore, expect the wished-for intelligence from *me*.—To convince you now of the truth of this assertion—Mr. Frankland and I have not been taken notice of by a single creature among our friends and acquaintance, Mr. Desborough, Miss Plastow, and Mr. Fanshaw excepted.—You will, probably, see Mr. Fanshaw at Paris, if he is not yet arrived. He came here with a compliment from my aunt Selby, and desired to stand godfather to my boy: to whom, as well as to Mr. Frankland and myself, he behaved in the genteelst manner, in the most friendly manner imaginable. As to the herd of great and gay, with whom I used to be so familiar, not one of them will condescend to look upon the farmer's wife,

now

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now she has laid aside the fine Lady. Yet I can sincerely assure you, my dear Bell, that I feel not a moment's uneasiness at their neglect. I know myself so much happier than I should have been in the most exalted sphere of life, without Mr. Frankland, that while he continues to be pleased with me, I shall never repine: nay, should he change, I shall derive some consolation from the recollection of my having been once the happiest of women: of my having enjoyed a felicity which I never could have expected with any other man. There was something in his looks and manners, which struck me when I first beheld him; and the similitude which I afterwards discovered in our tastes and tempers, attached me very closely to him.—I have never had occasion to alter my sentiments about him: I am perfectly satisfied with my

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my choice : other people are not : they have, therefore, the most reason to find fault with me and my choice ; they fancy they have at least.

To give you a specimen of the way of the world, I will communicate a little anecdote concerning Charlotte Wills.— You remember Miss Wills : her father, though a very considerable merchant, met with disappointments which rendered him unable to leave her any fortune. She was left, indeed, entirely to the care of Lady Bridgen, her father's sister, that she might be provided for, and rise, by her accomplishments, from nothing, as her aunt had done before her. Miss Wills was always, you know, reckoned very pretty : and she at last managed matters so well, that old Lord C——, who is half blind, and quite lame, worn down

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down with diseases, and soured by his sufferings under the pressure of them, married her. Being weary of mixing with pleasurable parties, in which he can have no share, and being advised by his physicians to a change of air, and a more tranquil state of life than he could lead in London, he has hired a house within a mile of us. Two or three mornings ago, as it was a fine, clear frost, I had a great mind to take a walk with my maid, and my boy. The air, I thought, would do the child good; and I went with him myself, that I might be sure he would not be kept out too long. The pleasantness of the walk, and my attention to my boy, carried me, imperceptibly, farther from home than I had, at first, intended.—On a sudden the wind changed, and a drizzling shower came on, which was by no means agreeable

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able to me: I was alarmed, indeed, a good deal on my little Charles's account, fearful of his taking cold. I really became quite anxious, and took off my cloke to cover him, in spite of the remonstrance of my maid, who assured me, more than once, that I should catch my death. At that instant a post-chaise and four, with the most elegant liveries, whisked by. As I was in a dirty part of the road, I was splashed all over by the horses from head to foot: a very fashionable female then thrusting her neck out at the window, ordered the carriage to stop. — Two footmen, in consequence of her orders, who followed on horseback, came up, and told me their Lady desired I would step into the chaise. I heard the invitation with pleasure, as I had been very uneasy about my boy; and taking him from his maid,

went

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went immediately to the carriage. —
Guess my surprize at finding Lady C—
in it: I had never spoke ten words to
her in my life; but was extremely glad
to accept of her civility: I, therefore,
stepped in without much ceremony.—
As soon as I had seated myself, with my
child in my lap, she exclaimed, with a
great deal of haughtiness, and affected
surprize — “Heavens! Lady Lucy
“ Frankland! Is it possible a woman of
“ *your* quality to be on foot! and in
“ this trim too, loaded with a child!
“ With much reason do people say that
“ you have degraded yourself—Lord
“ bless me!—but it must be very low
“ with you indeed, to make such an
“ appearance — Well may the world
“ condemn such unequal, such prepo-
“ sterous matches! *yours* is surely a
“ strong proof of the wretchedness of
“ them.”

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“them.” —“Say rather *yours* is, Madam,” replied I, provoked, beyond all bearing, at her insolent compassion —“I am every way agreeably disposed of by being married to a man perfectly amiable; and of a suitable age and taste; while *you*, on the contrary, are, in the prime of life, wedded to old age, disease, and ill humour.” —“Upon my word,” answered she, reddening with anger, “I am mighty well rewarded for my politeness; but so it ever is—one never gets any thing but ingratitude and abuse from people who have shabby connections. I will never lessen myself so much again, as to take the least notice of creatures so vastly beneath me, I am resolved.” — I staid not to hear any more of her impertinent language: I desired the fellows to stop and open the door. The
servant

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servant who helped me and my boy out behaved with infinitely more politeness to me than his insolent mistress had done ; for he offered to carry my dear little Charles home. — I thanked him ; but told him I should soon overtake the maid.—I *did not* overtake her, however ; I began to be almost weary — it had ceased raining ; yet I walked very uneasily. — Just when I was ready to faint, Mr. Frankland appeared, with his chair. — Jumping out of it immediately, he pressed me tenderly to his bosom, and asked me how I came so far from home, and without informing him whither I was gone — “ I have been quite miserable on your account,” continued he ; “ I never wished more for your return : “ and as it rained, I could not help ordering Bob to get the chaise ready as soon as he could, that I might set out
“ in

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“ in search of you.”—It is impossible for me to tell you, my dear friend, the thousand obliging, tender things he said, nor the kind apprehensions he expressed with regard to me and my boy. Surely such behaviour from such a man makes me ample amends for the want of those gawdy decorations, and of that pompous style of living, which make Lady C—— at once so wretched and so proud : so proud, as to insult those who never have offended her.—My dear Frankland asked me a million of questions, in the most endearing manner, about my health, and about my sweet boy’s : but I carefully avoided mentioning any thing relating to Lady C——, because I would not wound his gentle heart with a supposition that I was slighted or insulted for his sake, in the world. I almost forgot, indeed, all that Lady C—— had

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said, when I met *him*, and have now only endeavoured to recollect it, that you may be satisfied I converse with very few of my old friends and acquaintance; for you may be assured that most of them *think* pretty much like Lady C—— about my *marriage*, whatever they may *say* concerning it.—After this information, you cannot imagine me capable of writing what is said concerning *you*; but every body must, in *my* opinion, approve of the spirit and propriety with which you have acted; and I dare believe that you will meet with a lover full as agreeable as Lord Ashbourne, and more constant than he has been.—That you may find such a lover, is the sincere wish of

Your very sincere friend,

L. FRANKLAND.

L E T-

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LETTER LXII.

Mr. FRANKLAND to Mr. DESBOROUGH.

MY Lucy is more and more angelic every hour: would you believe it? — She saw my foolish trifling with Maria; she was told every minute circumstance about it, by Sir George Caswell, which could tend to make her uneasy, to alarm her; yet she never discovered the least jealousy or discontent. Astonishing! What an excellent mind must she have! She is indeed all goodness. I never can be worthy of her.—I have told you that I could not endure the thoughts of deceiving her; that I had resolved to discover all my folly to her, with regard to Maria—I only waited till I imagined she had recovered her strength: wondering,

K 2

I must

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I must own, during the recovery of it, that she never took the smallest notice of Miss Waters's departure from the Rectory, which she left soon after the conversation she had with me in the garden. I thought it odd, I confess, that she never mentioned the name of Maria, as she used to be frequently at our house. One day therefore I said to her, "You do not seem to miss Maria, my dear: she never behaved disrespectfully to you, I hope, or took any improper liberties — If she *had* taken such liberties, she should not have come here *so* frequently."

"No, never, Mr. Frankland," replied she, with a look of surprise: "how came you to imagine any such thing?"

"I am

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“ I am pretty well assured, my dear,” said I, “ that she did not behave properly to *you*, though you are too good to take notice of her improprieties.”

“ Indeed you are mistaken,” answered she, “ I never saw her do, I never heard of her doing, any thing improper.”

“ You are so considerate, my Lucy,” said I, “ and so generous, that, faultless as you are yourself, you can pity, and even overlook, the failings of other people.”

“ I faultless ! Mr. Frankland ?” answered she, with a beautiful glow in her cheeks — “ I have a thousand faults ; but you are so kind, so partial, that you will not see them.”

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“ I can truly return the charge of
“ kindness and partiality, my dear Lu-
“ cy,” replied I : “ you shut your eyes
“ against my imperfections, but I scorn
“ to deceive you—I am sincerely ashamed
“ of my past folly ; and I must, in or-
“ der to ease myself of a load of dis-
“ quiet, make a full confession to you.—
“ I cannot be at rest till I have dis-
“ closed every secret of my heart.— I
“ reproach myself severely for having
“ so long concealed from you what I
“ ought to have communicated before :
“ but I was fearful of agitating your
“ spirits too much.”

Smiling, with an inexpressible sweet-
ness on me, while I spoke the few last
words, she replied, when I had uttered
them, looking up in my face with a charm-
ing

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ing significance in her deareyes,—“What
“ have you to tell me, now?”

Pulling her down on my lap, I then related, circumstantially, every thing relating to Maria. To tell you how she received intelligence, which any woman in *her* situation would have thought the most unwelcome, is impossible. She looked unutterable things : she said little however—she only called me her amiable, her excellent Frankland ; her dear, her tender Charles —smiled —and wept.—When I asked her if the precious tears which watered her cheeks were a pardon for my follies — She answered—
“ No—they flow from excess of joy—
“ I rejoice at your having no faults
“ which stand in need of forgiveness—
“ No man, except yourself, would have

“ so behaved, being so tempted; and
 “ by such a fine girl too.”

Flattering creature! Where is the man who can boast of so delightful a companion? of so tender a friend? In my Lucy I find the mistress and the wife I ever wished to meet with—Never will I again do any thing to render myself unworthy of so inestimable a treasure; nor shall I ever forget the weakness of my past conduct. My *recollections* will certainly prevent *repetitions*, be the *provocatives* ever so strong. I wish, however, I had not played the fool with Maria. The husband of such a woman as *my* wife ought not to cast a single look at any other!

Sir George Caswell, finding that he
 could not make my wife like him,
 nor

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nor make *me* like any other woman, has removed himself to London—I am not sorry for his departure: had he remained here, we certainly should have come to an open quarrel: *that* would have made my Lucy extremely uneasy, and consequently would have filled me with real anxiety. If people would but let us alone, we should be the happiest of human beings. My boy, if he could speak, would fend his duty to you. As you have made yourself a kind of parent to him, I shall bring him up properly obedient to you: by so doing, I hope I shall not improperly express the grateful sense I have of your friendship to

Yours,

C. FRANKLAND.

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L E T T E R LXIII.

Lady BELL to Lady LUCY,

THANKYEE, my dear friend,
thankyee, for the pretty fellow
you have sent me. I can no longer de-
fer paying my acknowledgments. Why,
this Fanshaw is handsomer, and has
more wit, sense, and every thing, than
Lord Ashbourne.—He will be a warmer
lover too—if he is a lover at all—I mean
of *me*; for, at present, your Ladyship
is the woman who engrosses his thoughts.
No man, indeed, can speak in higher
terms of a woman than *he* does of *you*:
but I can bear *his* raptures, on *your* ac-
count, better than I did *Lord Ashbourne's*
on *Miss Plastow's*; as you are married,
my dear, you can do me no mischief:

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you will not take my man from me when I have got him—yet whether I ever *shall* get him or not, is a question not easily to be answered. I think, however, that there is a great tendency in him towards me, as *your* friend: he even ventures to fancy that there is a similitude in our features. I confess I never heard of a resemblance between them before: but men see strange things. It is vastly lucky though for me, as he is so violent an admirer of you, that there happens to be a likeness between *me* and your Ladyship. It is impossible for him to think me *very disagreeable*—Yet, as I have been already so duped by one man, I ought to be extremely slow in giving credit to another. — Appearances are very deceitful: but he comes quite *a-propos* to be my dangler: I wanted an attendant in publick; I wanted also a

man to countenance me just now, being in a deserted state. Mr. Fanshaw is the thing: he is handsome, young, lively, and possessed of an affluent fortune; with that fortune he has a soul to spend it with elegance and taste. He is a charming fellow to be at one's elbow in such a place as Paris. Once more, therefore, I thank you for sending him hither, and for all the civil things you said of me to him: they may have a proper weight in due time.

I am sorry that you are so much neglected by all your old acquaintance; but if they resemble Lady C——, you are much better, I think, without them, than with them. What an insolent creature! I have always observed that your half-bred people can never bear any exaltation: it makes them absolutely giddy;

dy ; they neither know themselves, nor any body else. You treated her, in my opinion, with a very proper contempt : but there is a delicacy in your concealing this insult from Mr. Frankland, which would be imitated by few of your sex upon such an occasion. I have often wondered to see women, who are really not in the least concerned in the marriages of their female acquaintance, look upon them in so despicable a light, if they choose men with smaller fortunes than they have reason to expect. One would imagine that an opposite mode of behaviour might be adopted in such situations—As envy is the predominant passion in the generality, at least, of both sexes, those who see their friends degraded should be quite pleased, and not thrown into an ill humour. *Your* uncommon happiness in the marriage state certainly
makes

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makes you an enviable woman — as matrimonial felicity is but rare—yet you will remain, I find, unmolested, in consequence of it, if you do not dazzle the eyes of your acquaintance with your riches ; most people choos[ing] rather to be opulent than happy.—I am really sorry, however, that you cannot learn the general opinion about *me*. I dare say I am spared as little as you ; but we may *both*, Lucy, in time, perhaps, have an opportunity to laugh at them in our turn.

IN CONTINUATION.

Fanshaw has just brought me the sweetest set of boxes for my toilette, of *Nuns work*, you can imagine. Upon my word, he has a fine taste in every thing.

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thing. Hearing that I was writing to *you*, he desired me to say all that the most respectful and affectionate friendship could inspire—not forgetting your little son.

Lord Ashbourne has been gone for England these three days: he took a very polite leave of me; and again begged my pardon for every thing that he might have said to offend me. I wished him as happy with his Plattow, as I do you and myself with the men we like best.

Yours most affectionately,

A. WALLACE.

LET.

L E T T E R LXIV.

Mr. FRANKLAND to Mr. DESBOROUGH.

MY dearest Lucy will, I hope, at last, be rewarded for her extreme condescension in accepting of a man with so small a fortune as myself. She has received news of the death of Mr. Menel, at Montpellier, just as he was upon the point of being married. As he was her father's brother's son, and as he made no will, my wife comes into the possession of a very ample fortune by inheritance. She inherits, indeed, every thing belonging to him. This considerable—and unexpected—acquisition, however, seems only to give her joy by
enabling

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enabling her to make *me* some amends for having married an indigent woman of quality, *as she calls herself*. For my own part, I am chiefly pleased with it as it will throw her into the sphere of life in which she was born—in which she is thoroughly qualified, in every respect, to shine. I am sufficiently rich in the possession of *her*; richer with *her* than if I was possessed of all the treasures of the east. I wish not for *myself* more than I enjoy: but I have long earnestly wished that my Lucy was in a situation to live in a manner suitable to the rank to which she was born. The more ready she is to give up the indulgencies to which she has a right, the more indulgencies does she deserve. She deserves every thing the heart of man can invent to make her blessed. I rejoice, there-

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therefore, that it will be now in her power to gratify every wish of her heart—She will, I doubt not, shine with as much lustre in prosperity, as she *has* shone in adversity:—to shine in the former state is to be very uncommonly distinguished. May the exemplary conduct of my dear Lucy ever make a proper impression on *him* who must ever be attached to *her* alone!—This is the sincere wish, this is the fervent prayer of

Your happy, happy friend,

C. FRANKLAND.

LET-

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L E T T E R LXV.

From the same to the same.

STILL more discoveries of the virtues of my amiable wife.—Were all women like *her*, every marriage, on the woman's side, would be a *disinterested* one; an union cemented by the sincerest and tenderest friendship that can possibly subsist between the two sexes. What friendship between man and man can equal the dear, delightful intercourse between a husband and a wife, when the latter has the person and the mind of my Lucy! With a much less amiable person indeed than her, and with a less exalted understanding, a woman must, with a delicate sensibility like hers, with a gentleness of heart like hers,
often

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soften a man of the most rugged disposition—How must *he* feel when the woman, to whom he is united for life, has, with a form highly elegant, a set of beautiful features, most happily arranged, and who is adorned with every female accomplishment to charm his senses, and subdue his heart? I never think of my foolish trifling with Maria, but with the utmost contempt for *her*, with the greatest detestation of *myself*.

I knew not, till a few days ago, that my dear Lucy had still farther reason to think meanly of me. Mrs. Bowen came to tell me that she had something to communicate to me, which would, she believed, give me pleasure.—“Miss Waters,” said she, “is gone into Leicestershire, to live near her father, upon an annuity of fifty pounds, which

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“ which Sir George Caswell has just
“ settled upon her, in consequence of
“ a promise she made to do every thing in
“ her power, to draw you away from
“ Lady Lucy; against whom he had,
“ I find, the most infamous designs.”

I told Mrs. Bowen, that I had always suspected Sir George of being very impertinent to my wife: but that, as she had never complained of his behaviour, I hoped I had been mistaken.

“ You were *not* mistaken,” replied Mrs. Bowen, “ Lady Lucy never
“ mentioned any thing relating to Sir
“ George to *me*; but I know he was
“ very much your enemy, as Miss Wa-
“ ters informed me that he, the very
“ day she discovered his designs to *you*,
“ had

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“ had been assuring Lady Lucy you
“ were false to *her*, and fond of Maria.”

I answered, that it might be so ; but that my wife had concealed Sir George’s behaviour to her from *me* ; adding, that if I had been acquainted with it, I certainly should have demanded satisfaction of him for so gross an insult to us both.

“ For that reason,” said Mrs. Bowen,
“ my Lady, I imagine, suppressed it ;
“ but Miss Waters communicated to
“ me all that passed, having received
“ her intelligence from Sir George himself, who upbraided *her*, because he had
“ not been more successful ; telling her,
“ at the same time, that Lady Lucy
“ declared she could not expect to keep
“ so agreeable, so amiable a man as you
“ to

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“ to herself; adding, that while you
“ treated her with the greatest tender-
“ ness, she should never complain.”

Here is a woman, Desborough! —
What true greatness of mind is united
with her charming person! How I
adore her! How justly has she been
provoked to be discontented with me;
to distrust me! Yet ever, in appearance,
satisfied, ever kind, ever obliging, it
was impossible for me to imagine, during
the provocations I gave her, that she
had heard the slightest whisper of de-
traction against me.

Leaving Mrs. Bowen immediately, I
hastened to my dearest girl, to tell her
that every hour brought fresh proofs of
the excellence of her disposition, and of
her tenderness for me. I told her also,
indeed,

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indeed, that she ought to have acquainted me with Sir George's insolence, which called for my resentment.

“ I would rather have endured the
“ most insolent behaviour from him,”
answered she, “ than have endangered
“ your dear, your most valuable life.”

She actually trembled while she spoke these words, apprehensive of my still retaining a sufficient quantity of resentment to make me quarrel with Sir George. I looked, most probably, as if I thought him deserving of the severest chastisement ; for she earnestly conjured me to forget what was past, and to regard Sir George as a man to be treated only with neglect and contempt.

I have scarce left myself room to inform you of the alteration which the sudden

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sudden and large addition to my fortune has made already in those who once called themselves my friends. Lady Lucy and I have received letters and cards innumerable from all parts, with congratulations, and offers of services of all kinds.—How extremely kind are they, now they are sure we do not want them! Such is the way of the world!—Of *that way* I have seen enough to wish to remain in a private sphere happy, thrice happy, with my amiable Lucy.—However, in a private or public sphere, you may be always sure of a sincere welcome from

Your ever affectionate friend,

CHARLES FRANKLAND.

P. S. My boy thrives apace; he will soon be able to send his duty to you.

LETTER LXVI.

Lady BELL to Lady LUCY.

I SIT down to write to you in the greatest hurry, to tell you that Mr. Menell is dead. He died at Montpellier the day before that intended for his wedding one; the day before he was to have been married to a Miss Rich-ton—You cannot, I think, have too early intelligence about this capital event, as you may—not having been properly informed of it—make the necessary enquiries.—I hope Mr. Menell did nothing, before he died, to prevent your enjoying what is certainly your right upon his decease. He has, probably, left *some* legacies, but I shall be sorry to hear of any considerable ones, as I wish you and
Mr.

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Mr. Frankland to be possessed of an ample fortune; and the more do I wish you to be in possession of such a fortune, that you may *provoke* those insolent creatures who have slighted you, because you had a small income, and because you had the virtue, the generosity, to marry a man from the most *disinterested* motives.

Fanshaw, who, by the way, gains upon me prodigiously, and who, had I not made a kind of vow never to put faith in man again, would, very probably, succeed the fickle Ashbourne—speaks in the highest terms of Mr. Frankland, and says, that if any body can deserve you, *he* alone *must* be the man. He never saw a man so anxious about a wife (he tells me) so eager to please her, as *he* was to please you, at a time when

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every proof of tenderness and attention was required, to alleviate the pain you necessarily endured in the most trying of all situations. I am very glad to hear that there is one good and considerate man existing. I told Fanshaw so.—He replied, with a vivacity peculiar to himself — “Do you think there is but one? “Take *me*, and make me the *second* “best and happiest husband in the “world.”

Before I could answer this modest request, a letter was brought me from Lord Ashbourne.—Had not *Miss Plafow* and *my dear Louisa* been mentioned in every second line, I should have actually mistaken it for a love-letter to myself; so full was it of tender epithets, and soft descriptions. The poor girl must be far gone indeed; for I find, by
his

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his Lordship's account, that she was ready to expire with joy at the sight of him. In short, though I am glad they are happily met at last, I am so heartily sick of my Lord's detail of his felicity, that I shall forbid Fanshawe to say any thing in the *amorofo*-style to me for a considerable time; and, if I *should* be prevailed on to listen to him upon the tenderest of all subjects, I will return no reply to him.—I should be particularly vexed to have a sheet of my affectionate nonsense handed about among his male friends. I do not say that I will be silently *woo'd*, but I will most assuredly be silent when I am *won*: and so, my dearest Lucy, in hopes of giving you joy, I remain

Your ever sincere friend,

A. WALLACE.

LETTER the LAST.

Lady Lucy to Lady BELL.

I THANK you, my dear Bell, for your last kind and entertaining letter: I thank you for your care about me: it was was kind, but, luckily, it happened to be needless. I received the earliest advice of Mr. Menell's death from a friend, who lately joined him at Montpelier, and who adds, that though he thought himself better, he could not have recovered. I had, for some time indeed before I married, looked upon him as lost, and therefore felt not so much as I should otherwise have done. I can truly say, that I did not wish for his fortune. I have, for a long while, been sensible that happiness is to be enjoyed

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joyed to as great a degree without a superfluity, as with it: yet, as my dear Mr. Frankland deserves every thing, I am glad he is now put into the possession of an ample fortune coming from *me*, especially as he is incapable of being dazzled by it, or prompted to quit a mode of life which he has found, by experience, so conducive to the health of his body, and of his mind. He has, indeed, met with such success in his *farming affairs*, that he intends to pursue them only in a more extensive manner. He will now have sums sufficient for the enlargement of his designs, for the benefit of his poor neighbours, as well as for his own immediate advantage. He purposes to sow more wheat and barley, to increase the stock of cattle, pigs and poultry, in order to have it in his power to supply the poor, and even the middling people,

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with the necessaries of life, at a reasonable rate. — By these proceedings, by letting small farms to industrious people, and by planting forest-trees, he will, of course, improve his estate considerably in a few years, and be really useful to society. — How nobly is a large fortune employed, when it is employed in *this way!*

I received, a few days ago, a letter from Lord Grassington, in which he congratulated me on the birth of my son, and entreated me to permit him to settle that fortune upon *him*, which ought to have been *mine*.

Mr. Frankland, in reply, told his Lordship, that as his son would, if he lived, inherit a very large paternal estate,

he thought it better that he should be

he must decline the acceptance of his offer.

Thus you see, my dear, my Charles well knows how to acquit himself upon every important occasion. I confess I am charmed with his reply to Lord Grassington, as well as his answer to the numerous compliments and invitations received by us since our elevation. What a strange magnetic power is there in wealth!

We have been exceedingly diverted with the behaviour of our former acquaintance, whom Mr. Frankland has treated, as they deserved, very cavalierly. To the Swymmers, and a few others, we shall continue to be attached; but we are by no means desirous of

PL 5 ending

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filling our apartments with *more* *visitors*.

Lady C—— has sent me a very repentant note, to beg pardon for the rudeness of which she had been guilty : but I dare say she never would have thought of making any apologies for *that* rudeness, if I had remained in the situation which occasioned it.

Mr. Frankland will take a house for me in town, that I may come to it when I please ; but we have mutually agreed to live chiefly here ; to enlarge our *farms*, if we want room, and beautify our rural spot, out of *gratitude* ; as we first, he says, enjoyed upon *it that* felicity so rarely met with in the fashionable world, by the pairs who are fashionably united. —How can happiness be expected from
mercenary

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mercenary marriages! When the two sexes come together with *disinterested views*, when their *hearts*, as well as their *hands*, are joined, then only can they expect to be happy. — That *you* may be *completely* so with Mr. *Fanshawe*, is the sincere wish of

Your ever affectionate friend,

LUCY FRANKLAND.

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